House OKs bill to authorize DLNR secretary to OK licensed vets. PAGE 2
CPA receiving $4.5M grant for Rota airport roof replacement. PAGE 3

Hafa Adai!

$1

Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXXIV, Issue No. 35
MONDAY FEBRUARY 19, 2024
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Air Force hosts 1st 'Pet a Jet' on Saipan

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI experienced its first "Pet a Jet" event hosted by the U.S. Air Force, giving the public the opportunity to explore the insides of two massive military jets that are currently in the Marianas for the Cope North 24 military training exercise.

Held in collaboration with the Commonwealth Ports Authority, hundreds of people

See AIR FORCE on Page 4

KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

Two KC-135s were open to the public for exploration during last Saturday's "Pet a Jet" event hosted by the U.S. Air Force in conjunction with the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

Dewey extradition warrant underway

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The extradition of fugitive Charles Lee Dewey III, alias Carter Allen Widmor, is progressing quickly, with the state of Indiana now working on providing the CNMI's Office of the Attorney General's Criminal Division with the necessary documents for an extradition order.

Assistant attorney general Heather Barcinas, who is assigned to this case, said the extradition of Dewey, who has been hiding on Saipan to evade multiple rape allegation in

See DEWEY on Page 4

Propst: Possible $20M shortfall 'extremely alarming'; suggests creating working group

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

House of Representatives floor leader Rep. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan) suggested Friday for the House to consider putting together a working group to address a possible $20-million shortfall this fiscal year, which he

See $20M on Page 4

Propst

CNMI wishes Japanese Emperor Naruhito a happy 64th birthday

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang, and many CNMI dignitaries joined Consul Ryoji Takagaki from the Consular Office of Japan on Saipan

See EMPEROR on Page 4

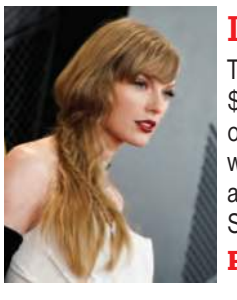
CHRYSTAL MARINO

Guests and dignitaries raise a glass in well wishes to the health of His Majesty Emperor Naruhito of Japan during the Japan Consulate's celebration reception for Emperor Naruhito's 64th birthday at the Grandvrio Resort Saipan in Garapan last Thursday.

INSIDE

NATION
President Joe Biden might have challenges selling a crucial part of his reelection strategy–that Donald Trump is a danger to American democracy.
PAGE 12

WORLD
Alexei Navalny's spokesperson confirmed Saturday that the Russian opposition leader had died at a remote Arctic penal colony, saying he was "murdered," but it was unclear where his body was as his family and friends searched for answers.
PAGE 13



LIFE & STYLE
Taylor Swift donated $100,000 to the family of Lisa Lopez-Galvan, the woman killed in the shooting at the Kansas City Chiefs' Super Bowl victory parade.
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Local

House OKs bill to authorize DLNR secretary to OK licensed vets

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The House of Representatives unanimously passed Friday a bill that will authorize the Department of Lands and Natural Resources secretary to approve and issue licenses to veterinarians to address the persistent lack of animal care services in the CNMI.

House members adopted during their session the House Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee report that recommends that House Bill 23-83 be passed. All 20 House members voted "yes."

The bill now goes to the Senate for action.

Authored by floor leader Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan), H.B. 23-83 proposes to amend the Commonwealth Code to clarify that the DLNR secretary is authorized to approve a licensed veterinarian.

Under the legislation, the DLNR secretary may authorize a licensed veterinarian professional associate and a foreign licensed veterinarian.

The JGO Committee chaired by Rep. Marissa Renee Flores (Ind-Saipan) finds that the CNMI lacks sufficient veterinarian services needed to sustain the welfare and well-being of the community.

According to the JGO Committee report, although CNMI animal health clinics such as the Saipan Humane Society currently handle hundreds of patients monthly, the CNMI continues to face a shortage in veterinarian services. Thus, the committee finds that there is a need to amend the current laws to increase access to veterinarian services in the CNMI.

The committee finds it appropriate to provide the DLNR secretary the power to approve and issue licenses to practice veterinary medicine and surgery in the CNMI.

In addition, the committee finds it appropriate to provide the DLNR secretary the power to authorize foreign veterinarians, veterinary technicians, and veterinary professional associates to practice in the CNMI under the direct or indirect supervision of an approved veterinarian.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

House of Representatives Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) presides over a session in the House chamber on Friday. One of the bills that the House passed that day was a legislation that will authorize the secretary of the Department of Lands and Natural Resources to approve licensed veterinarians.

Four nights of Miracle Healing Crusade

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

It will be four nights of faith, prayer, and miracle healing as Victory Chapel Saipan hosts the second edition of their annual Miracle Healing Crusade, set to take place 7pm nightly at the Garapan Central Park from Feb. 22 to 25.

After a successful first crusade last year at the Marianas Business Plaza and many individuals testifying of their healing, the church is excited to once again bring the event to the public, according to a news release from the church.

It said the islandwide event is focused on praying for the sick and miracle healing.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Guest speaker pastor Dion Jones from Guam and Victory Chapel Saipan pastor Erick Marino pray for the sick during lst year's Miracle Healing Crusade at the Marianas Business Plaza in Susupe.

The church is inviting members of the community who may need healing, whether physically, emotionally, or mentally, to the Miracle Healing Crusade.

They take no credit in the healing but say "we are not the miracle workers, Jesus is." Having witnessed many miracles and seeing the desperate needs on the island, from medical referral needs to mental health issues, they want to share the hope they have found.

Rosa Laniyo Spis, who is now a member of the church, was one of those who said she received a miracle at the crusade last year. She told *Saipan Tribune* that, due to a stroke that left her right side paralyzed, she had been reliant on her cane for close to 10 years. After attending the first Miracle Healing Crusade, she has not used her cane since then.

"It took me maybe one week, and then I finally threw away my cane. I said, 'I'm going to step out in faith and just try to walk on my own.' Without it, I did it. Until now, I'm still walking around without a cane," she said.

Spis encourages her fellow members in the community to come to the Crusade. "Have faith in God, believe in God. Don't be discouraged. Just to have faith and believe that you're going to be healed. Your faith is what is going to heal you. Your faith and Jesus are the two most the important things to remember," she added. from Guam will be the event's guest speaker and will be the one praying for the sick nightly.

There are no daytime sessions, except on Sunday morning when the session will begin at 10:30am in the Victory Chapel building in Chalan Piao next to the Bluesky Supermarket. All the nightly events will be held at the Garapan Central Park.

The event is completely free. For more information, contact (670) 484-2015 or check out the website at https://www.victorychapel-saipan.com/.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Victory Chapel's Miracle Healing Crusade in February 2023 at the Marianas Business Plaza in Susupe.

CPA receiving $4.5M grant for Rota airport roof replacement

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Ports Authority is receiving $4.5 million that will be used to replace the steel roof and structural support elements of the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport on Rota, according to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) over the weekend.

Sablan said in his *e-kilili* newsletter that the Federal Aviation Administration had announced Thursday that CPA is getting the Airport Terminals Program grant funding that will fund the replacement of the existing terminal roof, which measures approximately 11,380 square feet, including portions of the structural elements (footings, columns, beams, slabs) and associated modifications.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
File photo of Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport on Rota.

Sablan said the Airport Terminals Program, created by the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, provides competitive grants for airport terminal development projects that address the aging infrastructure of the nation's airport.

The FAA is awarding a total of $970 million, including the $4.5 million for CPA, from President Biden's bipartisan Investing in America agenda to 114 airports across the country, spanning 44 states and three other territories.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said in FAA's announcement that, under the Biden-Harris administration, they are doing more to improve the travel experience than ever before, from expanding consumer protections to modernizing the physical infrastructure.

Buttigieg said these investments, made possible by Biden's historic infrastructure package, will make it easier for passengers to get to and through airports, create jobs and increase safety for all.

CHCC brings tele-dentistry to Tinian, Rota health centers

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. is taking a significant leap toward improving dental healthcare in the CNMI by introducing tele-dentistry to the islands of Tinian and Rota.

This initiative, made possible through a Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs grant, aims to bridge the geographical gap and enhance accessibility to dental services for residents of these islands.

One of the key advancements in this tele-dentistry program is the connectivity between CHCC dental staff and patients on Saipan, Tinian Health Center, and Rota Health Center. Thanks to the installation of the ACE Dental Software on designated laptops across all three islands, electronic dental records are now easily accessible and retrievable. This integration ensures seamless communication and collaboration between the three islands.

To facilitate effective tele-dentistry, CHCC has equipped each island with essential electronic devices, including laptops, monitors, mobile carts, webcams, headphones with microphones, and intraoral cameras. Four mobile units have been deployed—one each for RHC and THC and two on Saipan. These units enable interisland communication, allowing the CHCC dental team to consult, diagnose, and discuss treatment plans in real-time.

The intraoral cameras are a game-changer, enabling dentists to capture detailed images of lesions and oral conditions. These images can be evaluated later or shown to patients during consultations, providing a visual aid that enhances understanding and involvement in their oral health.

In addition to the electronic devices, CHCC has installed televisions and headsets at the CHCC Oral Clinic on Saipan, THC, and RHC. This setup serves a dual purpose—distracting anxious young patients and assisting in reducing the number of children requiring dental procedures under general anesthesia. The distraction technique also extends to adults with dental phobias, creating a more relaxed and comfortable environment for dental visits.

The introduction of tele-dentistry to Tinian and Rota signifies a crucial step toward ensuring that residents on Tinian and Rota have access to quality dental care. By leveraging technology and innovative approaches, CHCC is not only breaking down geographical barriers but also addressing the unique needs and challenges of oral healthcare in the CNMI. This initiative is a testament to CHCC's commitment to improving healthcare accessibility and fostering overall well-being in the region. ***(PR)***

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Conge named to College of the Holy Cross' fall 2023 Dean's List

WORCESTER, MA— Gericho Louis Conge of Saipan has been named to the College of the Holy Cross fall 2023 Dean's List.

A member of the Class of 2027, Conge was named to the Dean's List for outstanding academic achievement during the fall semester of the 2023-24 academic year.

To qualify, students must pass four or more letter-graded courses with no failing grades during the semester and earn a GPA of 3.5 or higher.

The College of the Holy Cross, in Worcester, Mass., is among the nation's leading liberal arts institutions. A highly selective, four-year, exclusively undergraduate college of 3,100 students, Holy Cross is renowned for offering a rigorous, personalized education in the Jesuit, Catholic tradition. ***(PR)***

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Roy Doria Balangue] FCD-DI CIVIL
Petitioner,] ACTION NO. 23-0215
] **SUMMONS FOR**
vs.] **PUBLICATION**
Noeme Lucerna Balangue]
Respondent,]

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED RESPONDENT: NOEME LUCERNA BALANGUE

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is on file with the Court, within (30) days after service of the Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to the Petitioner whose address is P.O. Box 7623 SVRB, Saipan, MP 96950 as soon as practical after filing your answer or sending It to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950. It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or Mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice. If you fail to file and answer in accordance with this Summons, Judgement by Default may be taken against you for relief in the Complaint.

Dated this 14th day of February, 2024.

_____/s/_____
Clerk of Court

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality
Division of Coastal Resources Management
P.O. Box 501304, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-8300; Fax: (670) 664-8315
www.dcrm.gov.mp

Eli D. Cabrera
Administrator

Richard V. Salas
Director, DCRM

NOTICE

The Bureau of Environmental & Coastal Quality (BECQ) would like to inform the general public that the Division of Coastal Resources Management (DCRM) will be CLOSED from February 20-23, 2024 to host the 2024 Pacific Risk Management 'Ohana (PRiMO) Conference.

Regular office hours will resume on Monday, February 26, 2024.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
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Eli D. Cabrera
Administrator

Richard V. Salas
Director, DCRM

NOTICE OF CRM PUBLIC HEARING

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS (DPW) ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS RT. 310 (TAPOCHAO ROAD) / RT. 38 (CHALAN GALAIDI) AND RT. 317 (GUALO RAI ROAD)

*****

CANAAN REALTY, LLC CONSTRUCTION OF 42 RESIDENTIAL UNITS AND COMMERCIAL COMPLEX BUILDING

The Division of Coastal Resources Management (DCRM) will be holding a public hearing for the following three projects:

CRM Major Siting Application No. SMS-2024-024 – The Department of Public Works (DPW) is proposing to construct road improvements on Route 310 (Tapochao Road) within the Mt. Tapochao area and Route 38 (Chalan Galaidi) within the Galaidi/Navy Hill area of Saipan. The improvements for Route 310 stretches about 2.1 miles south from the Route 310/Route 312 intersection in Capitol Hill pass Coral Island Condominiums, and up to the foot of the Mt. Tapochao lookout. Route 38 improvements stretches about 0.25 miles downhill from Chalan Galaidi to Navy Hill Road.

CRM Major Siting Application No. SMS-2024-025 – The Department of Public Works (DPW) is proposing to construct road improvements on Route 317, also known as Gualo Rai Road beginning at the intersection of Route 33 (Beach Road) to Historia Place within the Gualo Rai area in Saipan. Total area to be improved is about 0.59 miles.

CRM Major Siting Application No. SMS-2023-102 – Canaan Realty, LLC is proposing to construct 42 residential units and one commercial complex building in As Lito, Saipan. The proposed project will be situated on six privately leased properties identified as Lot No. 361-6, Tract No. 22553, Tract No. 22554-2NEW, Lot No. 361-5, Lot No. 361-R4, and Tract No. 2254-3.

The public hearing for these projects is scheduled on **Wednesday, March 6, 2024, at 5:00PM, at the DCRM Learning Center 3rd Floor, Suite 301, Gualo Rai Center, Chalan Pale Arnold Road in Lower Gualo Rai, Saipan.**

DCRM continues to provide virtual participation via video conferencing through Zoom link: *https://zoom.us/j (Meeting ID: 6706648315).* Our Zoom meeting access code may change, please call the DCRM Permitting Office at (670) 664-8300 for connection assistance at least one-day prior to the public hearing date.

If you are unable to attend in-person or virtually, written comments may be submitted to the DCRM Permitting Office, Suite 305, Gualo Rai Center, Middle Road, Gualo Rai, Saipan, or mailed to the Division of Coastal Resources Management, P.O. Box 501304, or sent by fax at 664-8315, or by email at permitting@dcrm.gov.mp. The project file is open for review and comments during regular business hours from 7:30 A.M. – 4:30 P.M., Monday through Friday. All written and oral comments received by DCRM will be included as part of the permit application records and will be considered in any decisions concerning the proposed project. Please contact Ms. Sam Sablan at the DCRM Permitting Office at 664-8300/1 or via email at permitting@dcrm.gov.mp if you have any questions or would like to learn more about the proposed DPW road improvement projects for Routes 310, 38, and 317 or the proposed Canaan Realty, LLC project.

/s/ Richard V. Salas
Director
Division of Coastal Resources Management

$3K bail imposed on habitual offender

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Superior Court has imposed a $3,000 cash bail on a habitual offender accused of breaking into and stealing valuable items from a Chalan Kanoa home.

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho imposed Friday a $3,000 cash bail on Martin T. Castro, 38, who is facing charges of burglary, and theft and vandalism.

After his bail hearing, Castro was remanded back to Department of Corrections custody and was ordered to return to court on Feb. 23, for a preliminary hearing. Castro will be arraigned on March 4.

Castro has faced multiple burglary and theft charges in a number of different cases dating back to 2004.

In this latest case, according to court documents, the Department of Public Safety received at around 7:53pm on Tuesday Feb. 13, a report about a burglary and theft incident at the residence in Chalan Kanoa.

Police said that, according to the home's owner, Stephanie Gruy, she left her house around 10am and came back around 5pm. Because she couldn't find her laptop that she needed for work, she went through their surveillance footage from home and saw a male individual inside the house taking her Samsung laptop and Nintendo Switch.

Police reviewed the surveillance footage and allegedly recognized Castro, based on their interactions with him in previous cases.

On Feb. 14, a police officer spotted Castro walking along Texas Road and he was arrested on charges of burglary and theft.

Castro allegedly confessed and led police to the Samsung laptop and the Nintendo Switch, which Gruy later positively identified as her belongings.

DEWEY

From page 1

Indiana, is moving along and her office is just waiting on Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb's signed warrant for Dewey's official extradition.

"Right now, we are just waiting for the extradition order from…Indiana and the governor's warrant," she said.

Because Dewey has already waived his right to an extradition hearing, once Barcinas receives the paperwork from Indiana, she can officially get going with an extradition request that will be brought before Superior Court Judge Joseph Camacho for approval.

"As soon as we receive that, then we can get going with our paperwork here. The defendant did waive the hearing for extradition so as soon as all this paperwork is done and everything needed is in place, the judge can issue an extradition order and the Sheriff's Department from the State of Indiana will be the one coming here to the CNMI to pick him up," she said.

Meanwhile, the Fort Wayne Indiana police department is investigating whether Dewey had help in escaping to Saipan.

"Charles Lee Dewey III was under investigation for allegedly providing illicit narcotics and vape cartridges to minor children, and allegedly committing sex acts with them. FWPD detective Sgt. Todd Battershell led the investigations and subsequently arrested Mr. Dewey on Dec. 9, 2020. Mr. Dewey posted bond with help from family and quickly fled from the United States. More charges involving additional victims were filed while Mr. Dewey was on the run. The United State Marshals Service apprehended Mr. Dewey more than 7,000 miles outside of the United States on Jan. 24, 2024. Mr. Dewey is currently awaiting extradition back to Allen County. An investigation is now underway to determine if Mr. Dewey had help fleeing and if he received assistance while in hiding. We would like to thank the USMS for their perseverance and assistance locating Charles Lee Dewey, III," said the department in a recent press release.

Last month, the CNMI OAG charged Dewey with one count of fugitive from justice.

Dewey, who has been going by the alias Widmor since fleeing to Saipan in 2022, was arrested last Jan. 26 pursuant to a joint apprehension mission between federal and local law enforcement agencies. He was arrested at the Kagman Community Health Center where he works.

According to court documents, Dewey faces over six outstanding arrest warrants in Indiana on multiple cases involving rape, sexual misconduct with minors, sexual battery, child solicitation, possession of child pornography, dissemination of matter harmful to a minor, and more.

The charges against Dewey date as far back as 2020.

According to the affidavit of probable cause issued in Allen County, in Indiana against Dewey, a 15-year-old girl told police that the defendant propositioned her for sex four times beginning in August 2020 when he knew she was only 14 years old at the time.

In one incident, the victim told police that Dewey "made her engage in sexual conduct and when she cried and told him she was only 14, he answered that he knew it was against the law, but didn't care, because he had cancer and wanted to have as much sex as he could before he dies."

On Dec. 8, 2020, the father of another girl called the police at 9:51pm to report that Dewey had raped his daughter. The father told police he had forgotten his wallet and when he returned home, he found Dewey standing at the garage door of his home. After an altercation between them, Dewey drove away in a bright blue Toyota, the affidavit added.

According to court documents, the Northern District of Indiana, Great Lakes Regional Fugitive Task Force requested the U.S. Marshals Service District of the Northern Mariana Islands last Jan. 8 for help in locating and apprehending Dewey. Great Lake's RFTF shared that their information showed that Dewey has been residing on Saipan.

On Jan. 19, U.S. Homeland Security Investigations met with the Department of Public Safety and informed them that they believed to have located Dewey, who has been using the alias Carter Allen Widmor.

HSI managed to get a copy of Dewey's license under the alias Widmor and it matched a photo taken of Dewey in Indiana.

A media search was also conducted on the alias Dewey was using and one photo of him with staff at the Eucon International School where he previously taught English classes surfaced. However, law enforcement determined on Jan. 24 that Dewey was no longer employed or associated with Eucon.

Later, law enforcement learned that Dewey frequents another school. Through their cooperation, law enforcement learned that Dewey applied for a position with the school and photos provided by the school helped identify the fugitive.

On Jan. 26, law enforcement learned that Dewey was employed at the Kagman Health Center and a briefing was held in preparation for his apprehension.

That same day, at around 2:35pm, law enforcement officers went to the Kagman Health Center and met with Dewey in his office. Dewey allegedly admitted to officers his real name and he was immediately arrested.

He was charged with one count of fugitive from justice and was booked and detained at DOC.

AIR FORCE

From page 1

both young and old visited the Francisco C. Ada/ Saipan International Airport last Saturday from 10am to 1pm for a chance to get up close and in one of the two massive KC-135 military refueling jets that were parked at the airport.

According to Capt. Tim Shenk, a pilot with the 909th Air Refueling Squadron out of Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, Japan, he was surprised at the large turnout.

"We are very happy with this turnout. This is more people than we even expected. We have so much support [on] Saipan and so much interest from the public. We are happy to show the public what we're doing and we're very happy with the turnout today. We do events like 'Pet a Jet' frequently, but I believe this is the first time we've done this [on] Saipan. We do static displays in different locations that we are at," he said.

Shenk said events like "Pet a Jet" give civilians some insight into what they do.

"We want to give the community an opportunity to learn and see what we do every day. We want people to learn more about what we're doing and just be transparent with the public. It's really for anyone who's interested. This [was] an opportunity for them to come out and see these planes," he added.

Among the things Shenk and his team does is refuel military jets mid-air.

"KC-135s are mainly air refuelers. We provide other military jets with gas so they don't have to land, essentially extending their fly time, like if they're traveling across the ocean. Whenever they need to be in the air longer, we are there as support. We could also move cargo, but mainly providing gas is what we do," he said.

As for Cope North 24, which will last until Feb. 23, he expects to hone agile combat employment techniques.

"My general expectations from our Cope North exercise is to just learn more. We are exercising our agile combat employment techniques and since this is not a military base, your airfield gives us an opportunity to see what other limitations we run into if ever in the future we need to operate outside of a military base. That's a general thing and it's been a great experience," he said.

Saipan Tribune also spoke with individuals who participated in the "Pet a Jet" event. According to a young girl who goes to Green Meadow School, she hopes to become a pilot someday and it was fun to see such big jets.

$20M

From page 1

thinks is "extremely alarming."

"We can't just accept this trend and expect a $20-million shortfall," said Propst during the miscellaneous portion of a House session.

He cited a recent news article that quoted Rep. Ralph N. Yumul (Ind-Saipan) as saying during their previous session that the total amount of taxes and fees collected by the CNMI government in the first quarter of this fiscal year was short by $5.3 million.

"That is very alarming news," said Propst, adding that, as Yumul, who chairs the House Ways and Means Committee, had mentioned, if this collection trend continues and the government does not see more revenues coming in, they are looking at a possible $20-million shortfall this fiscal year.

At this point, he said, they need to reach out to Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, the business sector, their Senate counterparts, and Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan), to discuss how and what they are going to do, "moving on from here."

To change the collection shortfall trend, Propst believes that everyone in the Legislature, including the minority leadership, has to fully work together. "This is just critical. The last thing what we want to see is more hours cut or jobs cut. People are hurt, our families are hurting," Propst said.

He underscored the need to do everything to regain the CNMI's tourists. "I say this because it seems almost a contrast to what we're seeing in Guam," Propst said.

He said he has a friend who was passing through Guam and they couldn't even get a hotel room because they were full. "We're at 30% [hotel room] occupancy," the floor leader said.

EMPEROR

From page 1

last Thursday evening at the Grandvrio Resort Saipan to wish and celebrate His Majesty Emperor Naruhito's 64th birthday.

The night's event, which was graced by the presence of Tomonori Ito, who is mayor of Saipan's sister city of Katori, Japan, was held eight days before the actual birthday of the emperor, which falls on Feb. 23, 2024.

The mood was festive as guests mingled, tasting not only the Katori snacks that Ito offered and the fine Japanese cuisine that was served, but also the wine, including the traditional Japanese rice wine or sake.

In his remarks, Takagaki expressed gratitude to the CNMI for the comforting words its leaders extended to Japan after the devastating January earthquake that struck the Noto Peninsula in the Ishikawa Prefecture that claimed the lives of more than 230 people.

"I would like to express my deepest condolence to those who lost their lives and wish for the swift recovery of the affected region," he said. "The supportive words of honorable Lt. Gov. Apatang and people of the CNMI was very heartwarming and made me once again feel the strong bond between Japan and [the] CNMI."

Takagaki also noted that this year will mark the 80th anniversary of the Battles of Saipan and Tinian. "With this I sincerely do hope that more Japanese will visit and experience the beautiful nature, culture, and kind hospitality of the islands, along with further strengthening the relationship between Japan and CNMI."

Palacios is also glad to see "that we continue this very strong relationship and hope for an enduring bond for the people of the Commonwealth and the people of Japan."

Ito's special array of snacks from Katori that were given away that night was a hit with guests, who munched on the Hoshi-imo and Imokenpi, both variations of sweet potato that are a specialty of the city.

"We hope that these can convey some of Katori City's charms," said Ito, who also thanked the CNMI for its hospitality during his visit to Saipan back in October 2023. "I would like to end my remarks by wishing all those present, and the people of Saipan happiness and good health. We look forward to interacting with the people of Saipan even more in the future," said Ito

Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Chris Conception said he is grateful for the relationship between Saipan and Japan and to be able to be a part of the celebration that evening.

"We are very pleased to be a part of this celebration of the 64th birthday of the emperor of Japan. The father of this current emperor visited Saipan in 2005 in honor of the war dead, and so we're pleased to be able to continue celebrating the birthday of His Majesty, Emperor of Japan. It goes to show our long ties, historical ties with the people of Japan," he added.

Famalao'an poet Lowe to launch upcoming book 'Ocean Mother'

UOG

Arielle Taitano Lowe, author of *Ocean Mother*, a collection of poems that weave memories from her childhood in Guam.

UOG

The cover of Arielle Taitano Lowe's *Ocean Mother*.

The University of Guam Press is launching *Ocean Mother*, a collection of poems that weave memories from author Arielle Taitano Lowe's childhood living in Guam.

"*Ocean Mother* is inspired by the deep love I have for my home island of Guam, by my family and ancestors, and by the next generations of CHamoru poets," said Lowe.

Lowe is a Chamorrita poet, born and raised in Guam and currently based in Hawai'i. Her work has been featured in Poem-a-Day by the Academy of American Poets, Indigenous Pacific Islander Eco-Literatures, and Indigenous Literatures from Micronesia.

"As the daughter and granddaughter of CHamoru fishermen, the ocean has always been an important place for sharing stories. I want to continue the storytelling traditions that carry our culture," she said.

Ocean Mother is published through UOG Press's Famalao'an Poets Project, which seeks to amplify and celebrate poetry written by CHamoru women. The project is made possible through the support of an Equity in Verse grant awarded to the UOG Press by the Poetry Foundation, an independent literary organization that is committed to increasing and strengthening the presence of poetry within the United States.

The book's launch will be held at the UOG Fine Arts Theatre on March 2, 2024, from 10am to 12pm. The event will include spoken word performances by the author and select *famalao'an* spoken word poets. An author signing and meet-and-greet will follow and refreshments will be provided.

All patrons must register on UOG Press's Eventbrite page to attend the book launch and spoken word performance. Reservations can be made at uogpress-ocean-mother.eventbrite.com.

"*Famalao'an* poetry, local poetry, and local art provide a platform for our artists to express themselves," Lowe said. "It provides relief, connection, and creativity. We need our people to have space to dream and innovate."

Lowe hopes to show youth the opportunities for local poets to publish their work and will be hosting various author readings and writing workshops for various high school students on the island.

Details for a poetry workshop for the public and a Hawaii-based book launch will be announced soon. Interested participants are encouraged to follow UOG Press on social media at @uogpress for more updates.

Ocean Mother is available for pre-order for $15 at uogpress.com.***(UOG)***

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
CUC-RFP-24-013
PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF NEW GENSET UNITS FOR SAIPAN, POWER PLANT NO.4

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified Contractors or Vendors for the purchase and installation of new gensets for Power Plant No.4 located on the island of Saipan. The purchase and installation of the new gensets with approximately 6MW of total new output will improve CUC current power generation capacity needed to sustain critical electrical services to the community of Saipan.

The RFP Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration with CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The RFP package will be emailed to the registered email ID. Prospective Proposers for this RFP must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division by March 8, 2024 to be considered.

A Pre-proposal Conference followed by site visits will be held on **February 22, 2024 at 10:00 AM (CHST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of your submission must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-RFP-24-013, Purchase and Installation of New Genset Units for Saipan Power Plant No.4"** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 A.M.(ChST) on March 19, 2024.** Proposals mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before the due date and time. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing proposers.

All responses to this RFP should take into account any and all taxes which will become the obligation of the proposer awarded a contract.

All Proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Proposer due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the proposal under this request, or to procure or contract for services. The Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This request and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 27, 2024,** to Manny Sablan, CUC's Purchasing Administrator via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Richard Cano, CUC's Power Generation Manager via email richard.cano@cucgov.org and Christie L. Sablan, CUC's Senior Administrative Technician via email address christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

BETTINA G. TERLAJE
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2nd Floor Arrival Bldg
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950 |
Phone: (670) 237-6500/1 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
Website: www.cnmiports.com

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
PROJECT NO. CPA-RFP-003-24
SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF TYPHOON RESISTANT ACCORDION ALUMINUM SHUTTERS AT THE FRANCISCO M. BORJA TINIAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Notice is hereby given that the Commonwealth Ports Authority (the "CPA") is accepting sealed proposals, subject to the terms and conditions of this Request for Proposals (the "RFP") and other contract provisions, for awarding a contract to supply and install typhoon resistant accordion aluminum shutters at the Francisco M. Borja/Tinian International Airport, Tinian, CNMI. The Scope of Work and other considerations will be available for pick up beginning **February 12, 2024**, upon payment of $100.00 in cash, cashier's check or certified check to the CPA Accounting Office, 2nd Floor, Departure Terminal Building, Saipan International Airport.

Proposals will be received at the Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, 2nd Floor-Arrival Building, Saipan International Airport no later than **2:00 P.M. CHST, March 15, 2024.** Proposals received after the date/time indicated above will not be opened and will be returned to the Proposer.

Each proposal shall be accompanied by a bid bond, a certified check, or a cashier's check in the amount no less than **ten percent (10%) of the total proposal amount**. Checks shall be made payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

CPA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted for: (a) any of the reasons set forth in this Request for Proposals; or (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding bid rejection or cancellation; or (c) sufficient justification exists that awarding the project contract would not be in the best interest of CPA. CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said proposals if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA's best interest. All proposals shall become property of the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

_____ Date: _____
LEO B. TUDELA
Executive Director

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS LICENSING BOARD
P.O. Box 502078, Bldg., 1242 Pohnpei Court
Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel No: (670) 664-4809 Fax: (670) 664-4814
Email: info@cnmilicensing.gov.mp • Website: www.cnmilicensing.gov.mp

Pursuant to P.L. 8-41, Section 11, Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Governor David M. Apatang, through the Health Care Professions Licensing Board (HCPLB) hereby gives notice that it will hold its regular monthly board meeting on Wednesday, February 21, 2024, at 8 a.m. on Saipan. The meeting will be held at the Board of Professional Licensing Conference Room, BPL Building on Capitol Hill.

AGENDA

I. Meeting Call to Order
II. Determination of Quorum
III. Review and Adoption of Agenda
IV. Review and Adoption of Minutes (01/17/2024)
V. Public Comments
VI. Chairperson's Report
VII. Director's Report
  1. **Localgov Update – via ZOOM Meeting**
  2. **FY2024 Annual Budget Call**
  3. **Dr. Song Rhim's Monitoring Report**

VIII. Investigator's Report
IX. Communications from the Governor's Office & Legislature
  A. Governor's Office
  1. **Re-Appointment of Dr. Marty Rohringer and Dr. Glenda George to the HCPLBoard**
  B. Legislature
  2. **Public Hearing Schedule for Dr. Glenda George to the HCPLB – February 16, 2024, 10:00 AM**

X. Old Business
  1. Proposed Regulations Report (Ad Hoc Committee – Chairperson: Dr. Glenda George)
    a.) Social Workers and Mental Health Counselors

XI. New Business
XII. Pending Applications for Board's Review
  A. New Application
  B. Renewal Application

XIII. Miscellaneous Business
XIV. Executive Session: The Board may vote to meet in executive session to consult with Counsel on pending or anticipated legal matters.
XV. Announcements
  A. Next Meeting Date
  B. Adjournment of Meeting

Guam Guard's Team Binadu helps Adacao Elementary

DEDEDO, Guam—About 50 soldiers and family members from the Guam National Guard's Team Binadu gathered at Adacao Elementary School last Feb. 10 with ladders, lawn tools, paintbrushes, and a desire to serve.

Led by Capt. Tom Borgonia and 1stSgt. Rudel Retuyan, Team Binadu's goal was to help the school pass an upcoming inspection that would allow it to reopen almost nine months after being damaged by Typhoon Mawar.

"We decided to do community service because it's a way to give back, and it provides the opportunity to invite our families to join their spouses working together," said Borgonia. "Focusing on schools will impact the community hopefully to reduce the number of schools having split sessions, and transition back to normalcy."

Borgonia and his troops belong to Bravo Company, affectionately known as Binadu—"deer" in the Chamoru Language—of the Guam National Guard's 1-294th Infantry Regiment. At the moment, they are mobilized full-time under Task Force Talon of the 38th Air Defense Artillery Brigade, tasked with securing Guam's Terminal High Altitude Area Defense defensive missile system.

"We are from the National Guard but being activated under Task Force Talon provides us the flexibility to volunteer on weekends, and represent ourselves as Team Binådu," said Borgonia.

Binadu works with the Guam Department of Education to receive a list of schools that need assistance based on an order of merit. According to Borgonia, the merit is based on the school's date of inspection to open or remain open.

Adacao Elementary School principal Janice Chargualaf expressed gratitude for the soldiers of Team Binadu. "They did an excellent job, and our community is pleased and happy with the work they did," said Chargualaf. "It was nice to see everyone coming together, and we need more of that on the island especially after the typhoon, and with budget constraints. Binadu made it personal to me —we are one team and one Guam."

The scope of work for Team Binadu included water blasting, lawn maintenance, ceiling tile replacement, painting, movement of supplies, vegetation clearing, and debris removal. Many soldiers brought their personal equipment and tools from home, and some brought their spouses, significant others, and children. According to Borgonia, the community service provided opportunities for the children to gain service hours toward graduation or organizations such as National Honor Society.

"Re-inspection is next week, and hopefully it'll be good news," said Chargualaf. "We think we're almost there and we're excited. And the Guam Guard would be the reason why, if we pass." ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Soldiers from the Guam National Guard's Bravo Company, 1-294th Infantry Regiment (Chamorri Battalion), now activated as Team Binadu under Task Force Talon, help Adacao Elementary School prepare for inspection Feb. 7, 2024. Capt. Team Binadu looks to perform as much community service as possible while mobilized to secure Guam's Terminal High Altitude Area Defense

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Soldiers from the Guam National Guard's Bravo Company, 1-294th Infantry Regiment (Chamorri Battalion), now activated as Team Binadu under Task Force Talon, help Adacao Elementary School prepare for inspection last Feb. 7.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Soldiers from the Guam National Guard's Team Binadu paint an exterior hallway at Adacao Elementary School in Dedeo, Feb. 7, 2024. Binadu, currently on active duty orders to defend Guam's missile defense sites, hopes to accelerate the reopening of Guam's public schools hit hardest by Typhoon Mawar.

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY (CPA)
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
2nd Floor Arrival Bldg.
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950
Phone: (670) 237-6500/1 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cnmiports.com

NOTICE OF REGULAR MEETING

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) Board of Directors hereby gives notice that a regular meeting is being called on Thursday, February 22, 2024, at 9:30 a.m. in the CPA Conference Room located on the second floor of the Captain George Fleming Building at the Port of Saipan. The following items are on the agenda for the above-referenced meeting:

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Adoption of Minutes

II. PUBLIC COMMENT(S)

III. CORRESPONDENCES

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS
1. Financial Affairs Committee (with Grants and Internal Audit Report)
a. Collections
2. Airport Facilities Committee
3. Seaport Facilities Committee
4. Personnel Affairs Committee

V. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
1. FAA Meeting in Honolulu
2. Report on Washington DC trip with Governor
3. Grants Department
4. Assignments/Requests to Management/Staff

VI. OLD BUSINESS
1. Bridge Investment Group Lease
2. DFS Lease Extension
3. Sick Leave Donation Amendments
4. Position Description: Safety Officer/Quality Control Specialist

VII. NEW BUSINESS
1. ATM Concession: Procurement Method, Determination of Scope of Concession, Evaluation Plan
2. Board Resolution 2024-01
3. Amendment to Board Bylaws: Order of Business
4. Supplemental Budget Request: FAA Reimbursable Agreement for GSN Runway Rehabilitation Repackaging
5. Supplemental Budget Request: Vehicles for Tinian and Saipan
6. Personnel: Payroll Technician Position Description Amendment
7. Comptroller Employment Contract
8. Staff Attorney Employment Contract

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION
1. Executive Director's Report
2. Airline Rates

IX. MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

X. ADJOURNMENT

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony on the agenda items. A time limit may be imposed. Video conferencing is available via Zoom. ZOOM LINK: Meeting ID: 898 0318 0837 Passcode: 573227

JOSE C. AYUYU
Chairman, Board of Directors

February 16, 2024

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
CNMI GOVERNMENT
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2nd Floor Arrival Bldg.
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950|
Phone: (670) 237-6500/1 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
Website: www.cnmiports.com

INVITATION FOR BID

PROJECT NO. CPA-IFB-007-24
SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 15, 2024: 2:00 P.M.

PROVIDE AND INSTALL SIX (6)
BRAND NEW COMMERCIAL A/C UNITS
FRANCISCO M. BORJA/TINIAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

THE BID PACKAGE IS AVAILABLE FOR PICK UP AT THE COMMONWONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY (CPA) ACCOUNTING OFFICE, 2ND FLOOR, DEPARTURE BUILDING, SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT BEGINNING FEBRUARY 12, 2024. AN ADMINISTRATIVE PAYMENT OF $100.00 SHALL BE PAID TO CPA BEFORE A BIDDER MAY OBTAIN THE BID PACKAGE. PAYMENTS SHALL BE IN CASH, CASHIER'S CHECK, OR CREDIT CARD.

BIDDERS ARE TO SUBMIT ONE (1) ORIGINAL AND TWO (2) COPIES IN A SEALED ENVELOPE AND MARKED "PROVIDE AND INSTALL SIX (6) BRAND NEW COMMERCIAL A/C UNITS (**IFB-007-24**)" TO THE OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, 2ND FLOOR, ARRIVAL BUILDING, SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ON OR BEFORE 2:00 P.M., MARCH 15, 2024. BIDDERS SHALL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATIONS ALL CHARGES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS PROCUREMENT BEFORE FINALIZING ITS BID PRICE.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CPA PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION §40-50-1020 AND 1025 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CPA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF CPA.

LEO B. TUDELA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DATE: _____

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-24-015

A-16 SEWER LIFT STATION UPGRADE

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the construction of the A-16 Sewer Lift Station Upgrade project in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project consists of the installation of a new polymer pre-cast concrete wet well to replace the existing A-16 wet well; installation of OFCI submersible pumps and accessories; new aboveground valve station and appurtenances with concrete pad; installation of new bar screen to replace existing A-1 bar screen; rehabilitation of existing A-16 bar screen; installation of new gravity sewer mains and manholes; installation of H2S controls; reconnection to existing lift station force main; procurement of a portable pumping system with trailer and concrete pad; installation of temporary bypass pumping operations and dewatering; site improvements with new chain-link fence, two vehicular gates and a pedestrian gate; asphaltic concrete pavement driveways with partial compacted base course area; installation of new and replacement of existing gate valves; demolition of existing minor structures and electrical upgrade. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system. CUC requires the Project to be completed in **Two Hundred Seventy (270) calendar days** from date of award of contract.

The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **February 27, 2024 at 10:00 AM (CHST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-24-015, A-16 SEWER LIFT STATION UPGRADE"** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, **no later than 10:00 AM (CHST) March 14, 2024**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

A *Bid Guarantee* of not less than fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States, Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidder. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or request for clarification regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 (ChST) on March 1, 2024** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email at manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Ms. Nicolette Villagomez, CUC's Water/Wastewater Engineer – via email at nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org, and Ms. Christie L. Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Senior Administrative Technician – via email at christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

BETTINA G. TERLAJE
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Free Safety Culture Training sessions beginning February

The CNMI Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration office announces a series of free Safety Culture Training sessions taking place on Tinian, Saipan, and Rota in February, March, and April 2024.

These trainings will educate participants on how to identify and mitigate workplace hazards, develop comprehensive safety and health programs, and ensure compliance with OSHA's updated Form 300 injury/illness recordkeeping requirements. Also included will be updates from the Mining Safety and Health Office.

Additional topics include incident investigation methods, safety committee structure, safety communications approaches, training programs and overview of key OSHA/MSHA regulations.

The training schedule is as follows:

■ Tinian: Feb. 23, 2024, 10am-12:30pm at Tinian Public Library

■ Saipan: March 13, 2024, at AMP Theatre Campus

■ Rota: April 18, 2024, 10am-12:30pm at NMC campus

Sessions are offered free of charge. To register or for more information, please contact cnmi-osha@dol.gov.mp or https://bit.ly/47WuvNd. ***(PR)***

Local women vets, soldiers join Radewagen in thanking USCG's Fagan for A. Samoa visit

PAGO PAGO, American Samoa—Delegate Uifa'atali Amata Radewagen (R-A. Samoa) was joined Wednesday by local women veterans and some of American Samoa's women U.S. Army Reservists to thank U.S. Coast Guard commandant Adm. Linda Fagan, and send her off feeling especially welcomed by American Samoa. They had the opportunity to speak with and greet Fagan before her flight departed, and receive the report from the 118th Congress's Women Veterans Task Force, which Amata chaired.

"I am so pleased some of our local women veterans, military or ROTC, had this opportunity to meet Adm. Fagan, since the Coast Guard commandant is the first woman in American history to lead a military service, and our veterans and military families have such a prominent role here in American Samoa," said Radewagen. "Our people enlist at very high rates and are represented already in each of the military services, but I envision in future years a higher percentage than now of our veterans will have served in the Coast Guard, perhaps even being based right here at Pago Pago Harbor. I especially appreciate Adm. Fagan taking the time to speak to our women veterans and soldiers, as she honored them for their service, and said she enjoyed and appreciated her time in American Samoa." ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Delegate Uifa'atali Amata Radewagen (R-A. Samoa) with U.S. Marine Corps recruiter SSgt Helenia Porter and U.S. Army 1st Sgt. Avalos.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Delegate Uifa'atali Amata Radewagen (R-A. Samoa) and U.S. Coast Guard commandant Adm. Linda Faga with members of 9th Mission Support Command, U.S. Army.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Mariota Tuiasosopo, Fa'alagiga Glaude, high chief Fanene, Delegate Uifa'atali Amata Radewagen (R-A. Samoa), Rep. Fa'aui Vaitautolu, Leafaina Tavai, Ipu Lefiti, and Arriann.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Delegate Uifa'atali Amata Radewagen (R-A. Samoa) with service members from the U.S. military.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Delegate Uifa'atali Amata Radewagen (R-A. Samoa) pictured with women service members making the country proud in the U.S. Army.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Delegate Uifa'atali Amata Radewagen (R-A. Samoa) with wonderful veterans from American Samoa.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXXIV, Issue No. 35

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

Mark Rabago EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Applying for financial aid to college shouldn't be this torturous

The federal government had supposedly made it much easier to apply for college financial aid. Except there was a glitch and students could not access the new online tool they needed. Applications were delayed by months and the numbers of students seeking aid plunged.

That's the scene in 2024. No, wait, that was 2017. Actually, it's both.

It seems as though each time the dreaded Free Application for Federal Student Aid is made easier, it (temporarily) gets a lot worse. Never has the problem been bigger than this year, when colleges have been forced to put off their application deadlines to allow more students to work their way through the impossibly mangled FAFSA system, when they can at all.

Students are getting stuck in repeating loops, or told by the website that they already have accounts when they don't, and if they try to access this unheard-of account, they can't. Some parents who don't have Social Security numbers find they can get through the system without one. Others can't. School counselors who try to help their students get error messages but no indication of what the problem is or how to overcome it. The U.S. Education Department, which is responsible for the FAFSA, has set up help lines, but the lines are swamped with calls and many students can't get through. As a result, the number of applications is half what it normally would be at this point.

This week, U.S. Education Secretary Miguel Cardona said the department would soften many of the requirements for income verification, a complicated process for colleges that shouldn't be necessary anyway, since the new system uses families' federal tax returns. He's also lowering other bureaucratic hurdles.

It's a good start but not nearly enough. Cardona should hire a host of quickly trained people to answer phones or work with families online to fill out their paperwork then and there. He also must stand prepared to offer additional financial aid to students who miss their colleges' deadlines through no fault of their own.

Above all, the public is owed an explanation of what appears to be a bungled rollout of the new system. The online application, which had been promised by late October, was late by nearly three months. And once it was up and running, the endless loops, mysterious error messages and other glitches made it look more like a rush job in its early phases than a sophisticated system that would lighten the load on families.

Democratic lawmakers want guarantees that Cardona will make sure students don't fall through the cracks. Republicans want a Government Accountability Office investigation of the still-chaotic FAFSA rollout. Both are right.

But lawmakers also played a significant role in creating the financial-aid pandemonium this year. The Department of Education was ordered to produce this new, simpler FAFSA system at the same time that it had to start collect-

See APPLYING on Page 9

Alexey Navalny was too brave to be allowed to live long

By MARC CHAMPION
Bloomberg Opinion

Marc Champion is a Bloomberg Opinion *columnist covering Europe, Russia and the Middle East. He was previously Istanbul bureau chief for the* Wall Street Journal.

Alexey Navalny, who the Russian prison service says died on Friday, was a man as ambitious as he was spectacularly brave, punished for actions that would have been rewarded in other societies. All of those in the West who admire Vladimir Putin for his strength and anti-liberal values should take a long hard look, because Navalny's fate is the true face of the Kremlin's rule.

Navalny was arrested countless times for political protests, poisoned with a nerve agent, and jailed in effect for life on charges of "extremism." In reality, he was punished for daring to oppose and expose Russia's ruling kleptocracy. He had already outlived his life expectancy, not because he was unhealthy or, at 47, old, but rather because of the abuse he was subjected to in jail. He may well have fainted on a walk at his prison camp in northern Siberia, as the prison authority said, yet it's all but certain that his death was caused by what was done to him before.

As a victim, Navalny was far from unique. Boris Nemtsov, one of the few genuine opposition politicians to survive long into Putin's rule, was assassinated while crossing a bridge next to the Kremlin in 2015. Numerous countries have introduced so-called Magnitsky acts, in response to the 2009 killing in prison of Sergei Magnitsky, a tax advisor who exposed a massive fraud by the same Interior Ministry that cooked up charges to jail him. A list of all the Kremlin-critical journalists, politicians, activists and inconvenient businesspeople who've been shot, poisoned or fallen out of windows in Putin's Russia is long.

And yet Navalny was special, in that he seemed able to get under the Kremlin's skin like nobody else. Had he ever been allowed to run in an election, he almost certainly would have lost to Putin, his nemesis. He was no liberal, in the "woke" sense of the word; early on in his political activism, he went on marches with nationalists and neo-Nazis, whom he saw as allies, because at the time — long before the invasion of Ukraine — they also opposed Putin.

What made Navalny dangerous to the Kremlin was that he had the extraordinary degree of courage needed to investigate and expose the secret wealth of the nation's most powerful men, plus he had a genius for using modern media to broadcast their alleged theft in a country that has no free press. Navalny was poisoned while on a plane in Russia and almost died in 2020. He was flown to Germany for treatment, where it was found that the weapon used had been a military grade nerve agent called Novichok, which has also been used in other assassination attempts on Russian dissidents, including in the UK.

Navalny's YouTube film on Kremlin corruption, Palace for Putin, was made while he was in Germany recovering. Yet he released it only after returning to Russia in 2021 — "because we do not want the main character of this film to think that we are afraid of him."

As soon as he landed in Russia, Navalny was arrested, continued his activism in jail, was routinely placed in solitary confinement, and then transferred to a prison camp in northern Siberia in December, when he looked increasingly weak. Now he's dead. Palace for Putin was viewed more than 129 million times — and that was just the one about a vast building on the Black Sea coast that the Kremlin has denied belonged to the Russian president. Then there was the expose that alleged Putin also owns a $700 million superyacht and another about vast estates Navalny tied to former President Dmitry Medvedev.

In a kind of quantitative take on Navalny's place in Russia, the Levada Center, Russia's most independent polling agency, asked in 2021 how many people had seen Palace for Putin, and whether it had changed their attitudes to the president. More than a quarter of the country, 26%, had watched the video, according to the poll. Of these, 17% said their view of Putin had gotten worse as a result, 77% said it had no impact, and 3% said they now thought better of him.

Like most dissidents, Navalny was no saint. But he stood out for the sheer bravery of his decisions, above all in returning to Russia after what was clearly an assassination attempt by the state. I say clearly not just because Novichok is a chemical weapon only available to Russian state organs, but also because Navalny recorded his call to one of the men suspected of putting the poison in his underpants while he was traveling; the man confirmed what he and his colleagues had done.

Navalny cooperated in a documentary about him while in Germany. Asked by the director what message he would have for the Russian people should he be killed, he said it should be that: "Evil is only able to proliferate if good people do nothing, so don't be inactive." Navalny was never that, even when he had already experienced the full extent of the regime's plans for him. He may not have been afraid of the Kremlin, but the Kremlin was obviously afraid of him.

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Big business thinks mass shootings aren't its problem. It's wrong

By BETH KOWITT
Bloomberg Opinion

Beth Kowitt is a Bloomberg Opinion *columnist covering corporate America. She was previously a senior writer and editor at* Fortune Magazine.

Wednesday's shooting at the Kansas City Super Bowl parade, which killed one person and injured more than 20, was the 49th mass shooting this year. We are barely halfway through February.

President Joe Biden and other lawmakers put out the expected statements, giving their condolences and demanding change. So did the Kansas City Chiefs and the NFL. But so far corporate America has offered primarily silence.

This is a stark reversal from June 2022 when more than 500 CEOs and board chairs signed a letter urging the Senate to take "immediate action" on gun violence in the wake of the mass shootings at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, and a Tops supermarket in Buffalo, New York. The momentum had been building; 145 had signed a similar letter three years earlier after a shooting at an El Paso Walmart killed 22 people. (Signatories of both letters included Bloomberg LP chairman Peter T. Grauer.)

Clearly the appetite for this kind of outspokenness from some of America's biggest companies has evaporated; the mass shootings, however, have not. Not all that long ago, it was the norm for companies to speak out on social issues ranging from same-sex marriage rights to Black Lives Matter and racial justice. Companies took positions because they aligned with their corporate values, they claimed. And, of course, it was also good PR.

But now the Republican Party's war on "woke capitalism" and environmental, social and governance efforts has changed the calculus. Last year, House Republicans introduced a bill designed to stop "boardroom gun control" by prohibiting the federal government from entering into contracts with companies that "discriminate" against firearm businesses and organizations. In Texas, a 2021 law requires that banks that underwrite the municipal bond market must not exclude the firearms industry. More generally, the political right has tried to punish any company it views as pushing a "liberal agenda." Case in point: After Walt Disney Co. spoke out against Florida's Don't Say Gay Bill, attacking the company became a central tenet of Governor Ron DeSantis's political platform.

Against this backdrop, the bar has gotten much higher for a CEO or board to risk the backlash of publicly wading into a potentially hot-button topic. The idea that a company has a moral or ethical obligation to use its platform is passé. The litmus test is now: does the issue at hand impact a company's bottom line. When it comes to gun control, the answer from boardrooms seems to be a hard no.

But US companies are mistaken if they think gun violence doesn't fall into the category of a core business issue. The Violence Project Mass Shooter Database has found that businesses all too often find themselves the unintended host of gun violence: according to the research group, 20% of mass shootings have taken place at retailers; 15% at restaurants, bars and nightclubs; and 13% at factories and warehouses. From an employee perspective, 30% of all mass shootings are workplace related—meaning shooters targeted their current or former place of employment. (There is no universal definition of a mass shooting; a shooting is included in the Violence Project's tally if four or more people are killed.) Meanwhile, gun control advocacy group Everytown for Gun Safety has found that employers lose nearly $1.5 million every day in productivity, revenue and costs associated with victims of gun violence. (Michael Bloomberg, founder and majority owner of Bloomberg LP, helped found and is a current supporter of Everytown.)

Some companies have even started to recognize the potential damage mass shootings and gun violence can have on their business in the risk factors portion of their annual reports. Walmart Inc., for example, has warned since 2020 that "active shooter situations (such as those that occurred in our U.S. stores)" could hurt its operations and financial performance. The following year Kroger Co. started using similar language. Chipotle Mexican Grill Inc., like several restaurant chains, includes mass shootings in a list of factors that could hurt its business, the economy and consumer confidence.

In the current political environment, the cost for companies that speak out could be high. But the cost of remaining silent is higher.

Ukraine's military reset is doomed without more US aid

By JAMES STAVRIDIS
Bloomberg Opinion

James Stavridis is a Bloomberg Opinion *columnist, a retired US Navy admiral, former supreme allied commander of NATO, and dean emeritus of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University.*

It's been a tough week for Ukraine. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy replaced the popular leader of his military, General Valeriy Zaluzhnyi, with the current army commander, General Oleksandr Syrskyi. He has watched the flailing in the US Congress over a new tranche of funding for Ukraine. And Donald Trump, leading in most US presidential polls, is on the campaign trail firing shots at both Ukraine and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Meanwhile, Russian leader Vladimir Putin seems to have a real bounce in his step with an upcoming "election" that he will win handily and a long, propaganda-filled interview with US talk-show host Tucker Carlson. Russian cruise missile and drone attacks hit Ukraine almost daily, and Russian ground operations around Avdiivka are grinding away with modest success in the wake of failed Ukrainian offensives in 2023.

Yes, the Ukrainians did sink another Russian warship in the Black Sea and the European Union came through with a $54 billion aid package earlier this month. But the rumblings of dissatisfaction with the Ukrainian military in major Western capitals persists. It feels like a very low point in the fortunes of Zelenskyy and his people, despite the immense courage and determination they have shown over the past two years.

The Ukrainian war effort needs a reset. What should that look like, and can it succeed?

Let's start with the shift at the top of the military. It is entirely normal to have leadership changes in prolonged campaigns. When I was supreme allied commander of NATO, I had four different generals working successively for me in Afghanistan: Stanley McChrystal, David Petraeus, John R. Allen and Joseph Dunford. In America's Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln went through many top generals before finding the right one in Ulysses S. Grant. Bringing in fresh thinking and rested leaders makes sense.

In Ukraine, the shift was complicated by internal disagreements, in part over the failed offensive campaign and because Zaluzhnyi wanted to mobilize more civilians, a politically unpopular step. But Zelenskyy managed to paper over the conflict; he awarded the general the highest state honor and it appears there hasn't been a blow up at the highest levels in Kyiv.

General Syrskyi will have his work cut out for him. He was born in Russia and has the benefit of a traditional Soviet-style military background, which gives him powerful insights into how Putin's generals think. But he has also proven to be an early innovator in using drones against armor and other "new war" tactics. In terms of the reset, he is starting out emphasizing "clear and detailed planning" and trying to find way to rest his weary troops. The latter will require increased mobilization, probably of a younger cohort of soldiers. Zelenskyy's hesitance is understandable, but Ukraine simply has to generate more troops despite public opposition.

A second element of a reset be coming up with more advanced warfighting technologies and integrating them into the war effort. At the top of the list will be the F-16 fighters provided by the West, with most of the training done in the US and Germany. These formidable multirole fighters can take on Russian planes in the air and bomb their troops on the ground. While not a total game changer, a significant number of F-16s will help Ukraine across the long battlefront, especially if coupled with Western air defense systems. The problem is that the timeline for deployment keeps lengthening, with "by the end of this year" as the current vague estimate.

Drones are a better story: Improved generations will be operated by a new, dedicated branch of the Ukrainian armed forces (something the US and NATO should consider). And the war at sea, in which Kyiv has already sunk at least a third of the Russian Black Sea Fleet (including the Flagship Moskva), will be enhanced by new anti-ship cruise missiles.

But the third and most difficult portion of the reset is unfortunately not at all under Zelenskyy's control: the US election, and a Republican Party that is increasingly turning against the Ukrainian cause under the sway of Trump. About half of the Republican Party is now of the erroneous opinion that the Ukraine war is not an American problem, according to recent polling . There is a growing view on the right that if anybody helps Kyiv, it should be the Europeans. And all of this is tied to a Trumpian view that NATO is not valuable.

This is a dangerous moment, and not just for Ukraine. If the US walks away—as it did from Europe and Asia in the 1930s—authoritarian powers will fill the void. And we would likely end up, as we did in 1941, embroiled in a conflict on a far larger scale.

Zelenskyy and his supporters in DC—not just the Biden administration but also Republicans such as the 22 senators who voted in favor of the Ukrainian-Israel aid package this week—need to convince the US public that Ukraine matters and that NATO is a valuable alliance. It commands over 55% of global GDP, has 3 million active-duty troops, and a combined defense budget of over $1 trillion. The collective European defense budget is over $300 billion, more than China and triple that of Moscow. The EU nations pledged more aid to Ukraine in 2023 than the US; to characterize them as freeloaders is a bad faith argument.

Yes, any reset must include changes by the Ukrainian military command and new technologies. But unless a real effort is made to restore the truthful narrative—that Ukraine's fate is tied to Americans' own, and the best mechanism we have to win is NATO—there is real danger ahead. Zelenskyy can't do this by himself. It will require leadership in Washington from both sides of the aisle.

Stavridis is also vice chairman of global affairs at the Carlyle Group. He is on the boards of Fortinet, NFP, Ankura Consulting Group and Neuberger Berman, and has advised Shield Capital, a firm that invests in the cybersecurity sector.

APPLYING

From page 8

ing student loan payments, which had been on hiatus because of the COVID-19 pandemic. That's two massive projects, without receiving the funding the department had estimated it needed to produce a smoothly running operation. The price of that cheapness will be high.

That's something to remember the next time the federal government wants to "simplify" FAFSA.

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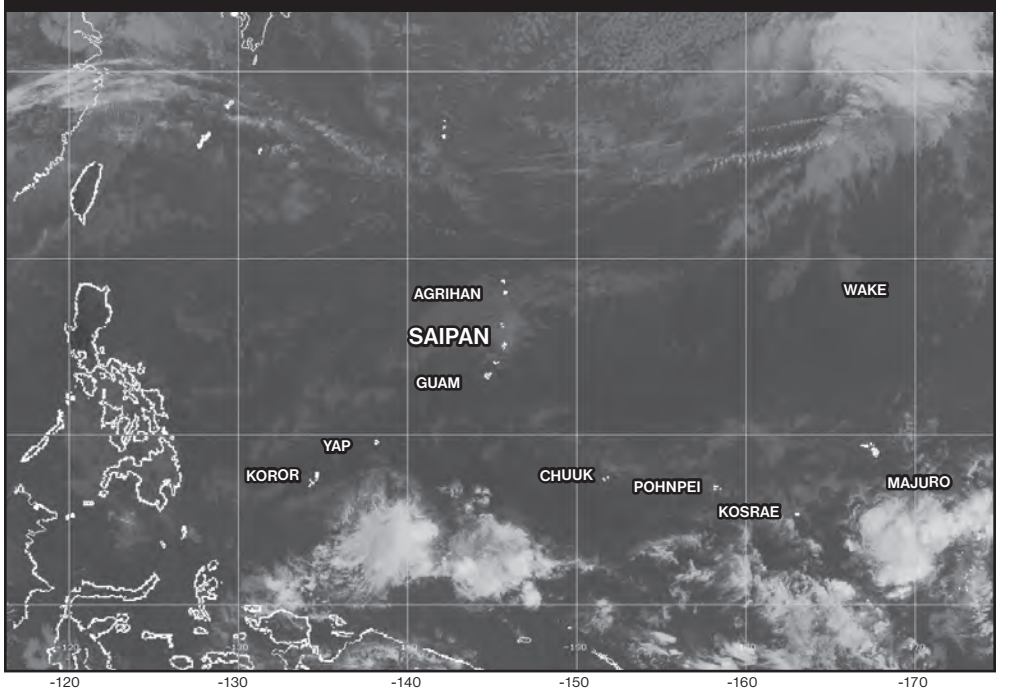
The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 10 to 15 mph, becoming breezy Tuesday.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 10 to 15 mph, becoming breezy Tuesday.	Mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.	Mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.	Mostly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.
86 77°	86 77°	86 77°	86 77°	86 77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 5:17 AM SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2024

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Moderate trades prevail in the Marianas, as a lingering shearline fragment continues to bring some light showers and cloudiness to the region. Tanapag buoy indicates seas are around 6 feet.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: https://www.weather.gov/gum/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Showers	85° / 77°
Palau	Thunderstorms	86° / 77°
Yap	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°
Chuuk	Showers	84° / 80°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	84° / 78°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	84° / 78°
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	85° / 79°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:40 AM	6:21 PM
Tuesday	6:39 AM	6:22 PM
Wednesday	6:39 AM	6:22 PM
Thursday	6:38 AM	6:22 PM
Friday	6:38 AM	6:22 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	2:31 AM	1:50 PM
Tuesday	-	3:26 AM	2:45 PM
Wednesday	-	4:18 AM	3:40 PM
Thursday	-	5:05 AM	4:33 PM
Friday	-	5:47 AM	5:24 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	81° / 64°
Beijing	Sunny	43° / 19°
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	72° / 63°
Honolulu	Thunderstorms	79° / 66°
London	Showers	46° / 45°
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	66° / 47°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	90° / 75°
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	79° / 59°
Miami	Sunny	79° / 71°
New York	Partly Cloudy	51° / 45°
Osaka	Showers	52° / 37°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	45° / 41°
Busan	Cloudy	46° / 34°
Rome	Showers	52° / 34°
Salem	Cloudy	66° / 58°
San Francisco	Mostly Cloudy	56° / 44°
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	39° / 21°
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	55° / 37°
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	58° / 50°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
5:57 AM	High Tide	1.49
10:31 AM	Low Tide	1.23
2:49 PM	High Tide	1.51
11:00 PM	Low Tide	-0.23

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SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Friday, Saipan Tribune offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $180. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 1, 2024

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA076	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily
UA193	7:50PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:55PM	9:50PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/703	3:10AM	10:30PM	4, 7 via ICN
7C3403/2305	4:40AM	10:20PM	Daily
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW308	2:15AM	6:10AM	Daily
OZ626	3:10AM	6:55AM	4,7
7C3403	4:40AM	8:35AM	Daily
7C3461	2:40PM	6:45PM	Daily Feb 7-16 only
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA189	00:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA189/174	00:40AM	8:45AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
OZ702/625	12:05PM	1:40AM+1	3, 6 via ICN
UA192/174	10:40PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA184/174	10:55PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
7C2306/3462	11:15PM	1:30PM+1	Daily Feb 7-16 only
7C2306/3406	11:15PM	3:30PM+1	Daily

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3462	08:00AM	1:30PM	Daily Feb 7-16 only
7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
TW307	7:45PM	1:15AM+1	Daily
OZ625	8:20PM	1:40AM+1	3, 6
7C3404	10:15PM	3:35AM+1	Daily

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 2, 2024

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

Judge orders Trump to pay $355M for lying about his wealth

AP

Republican presidential candidate former President Donald Trump speaks at his Mar-a-Lago estate, Friday, Feb. 16, 2024, in Palm Beach, Fla.

NEW YORK (AP)—A New York judge ordered Donald Trump on Friday to pay $355 million in penalties, finding that the former president lied about his wealth for years in a sweeping civil fraud verdict that pierces his billionaire image but stops short of putting his real estate empire out of business.

Judge Arthur Engoron's decision after a trial in New York Attorney General Letitia James' lawsuit punishes Trump, his company and executives, including his two eldest sons, for scheming to dupe banks, insurers and others by inflating his wealth on financial statements. It forces a shakeup at the top of his Trump Organization, putting the company under court supervision and curtailing how it does business.

The decision is a staggering setback for the Republican presidential front-runner, the latest and costliest consequence of his recent legal troubles. The magnitude of the verdict on top of penalties in other cases could dramatically dent Trump's financial resources and damage his identity as a savvy businessman who parlayed his fame as a real estate developer into reality TV stardom and the presidency. He has vowed to appeal and won't have to pay immediately.

Trump's true punishment could be far costlier because under state law he is also required to pay interest on the penalties, which James said puts him on the hook for a total of more than $450 million. The amount, which would be paid to the state, will grow until he pays.

The judge made clear, however, that the Trump Organization will continue to operate, backing away from an earlier ruling that would have dissolved Trump's companies.

Engoron, a Democrat, concluded that Trump and his company were "likely to continue their fraudulent ways" without the penalties and controls he imposed. Engoron concluded that Trump and his co-defendants "failed to accept responsibility" and that experts who testified on his behalf "simply denied reality."

"This is a venial sin, not a mortal sin," Engoron wrote in a searing 92-page opinion. "They did not rob a bank at gunpoint. Donald Trump is not Bernard Madoff. Yet, defendants are incapable of admitting the error of their ways."

He said their "complete lack of contrition and remorse borders on pathological" and "the frauds found here leap off the page and shock the conscience."

Trump said the decision was "election inference" and "weaponization against a political opponent," complaining to reporters at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida that he was being penalized for "having built a perfect company, great cash, great buildings, great everything."

James, a Democrat, told reporters "justice has been served" and called the ruling "a tremendous victory for this state, this nation, and for everyone who believes that we all must play by the same rules —even former presidents."

"Now, Donald Trump is finally facing accountability for his lying, cheating, and staggering fraud. Because no matter how big, rich or powerful you think you are, no one is above the law," James said.

Trump still owns the Trump Organization, but he put his assets into a revocable trust and relinquished a leadership role when he became president in 2017, putting his sons Eric and Donald Trump Jr. in charge of day-to-day operations. Engoron's ruling imposes a three-year ban on Trump serving as an officer or director of any New York company and bars his sons for two years, effectively requiring the company to find new leadership, at least temporarily.

The monetary penalties involve what Engoron said were "ill-gotten gains" that Trump attained by making himself seem richer. They include money Trump saved by securing lower loan interest rates and profits from the sale of properties that he might not have been able to develop without that financing.

Eric and Donald Trump Jr. were each ordered to pay $4 million, their share of profits from the 2022 sale of Trump's Washington, D.C. hotel, and the company's former longtime chief financial officer Allen Weisselberg was ordered to pay $1 million — half of the $2 million severance he's receiving. All told, Trump and his co-defendants owe $364 million, which James' office said grows to $464 million when interest is included. Weisselberg and another longtime company executive, Jeffrey McConney, were barred from ever holding a corporate finance or leadership role in the state.

Engoron put the Trump Organization under the supervision of a independent monitor for at least three years, extending oversight he ordered after James sued Trump in 2022, and said the company must hire an independent compliance director to ensure that it follows financial reporting obligations and rules.

Engoron wrote that stripping Trump of his companies, as he'd previously ordered, was no longer necessary because the company will be under a "two-tiered oversight" with the independent monitor, retired federal judge Barbara Jones, and the compliance director keeping an eye on any activities that could lead to fraud.

Because it was civil, not criminal, the case did not carry the potential of prison time.

Engoron issued his decision after a 2½-month trial that Trump turned into a frequent, albeit unorthodox campaign stage. He trekked to court nearly a dozen times, watching testimony, grousing to news cameras outside the courtroom and bristling under oath that he was the victim of a rigged legal system.

Chinese foreign minister says trying to cut his country out of trade would be historic mistake

MUNICH (AP)—China's foreign minister told a gathering of international security policy officials Saturday that trying to shut China out of trade in the name of avoiding dependency would be a historic mistake.

Wang Yi spoke at the Munich Security Conference. Host Germany wants to avoid over-reliance on trade with an increasingly assertive China and diversify its supply of key goods in an approach it calls "de-risking." That's in line with the approach of other industrial powers in the Group of Seven, which has stressed that it doesn't seek to harm China or thwart its development.

Beijing has criticized the strategy.

"Today ... more people have come to realize that the absence of cooperation is the biggest risk," Wang said through an interpreter. "Those who attempt to shut China out in the name of de-risking will make a historical mistake."

"The world economy is like a big ocean that cannot be cut into isolated lakes," he added. "The trend toward economic globalization cannot be reversed. We need to work together to make globalization more universally beneficial and inclusive."

Wang also renewed China's pushback against allegations of forced labor in the western Xinjiang region, where it is accused of running labor transfer programs in which Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities are forced to toil in factories as part of a longstanding campaign of assimilation and mass detention.

He complained of "fabricated information from different parties" and asserted that the aim is "to stop the development of China."

GRMC to discontinue mask mandate and revised visitation

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Guam Regional Medical City in Dededo, Guam.

DEDEDO, Guam—Guam Regional Medical City discontinued its mask mandate and returned to its regular visitation guidelines effective last Saturday, Feb. 17, 2024.

GRMC advises that individuals with symptoms such as cough, runny nose, shortness of breath, fever, congestion, or sore throat should avoid non-essential visitation due to the increased potential of spreading respiratory illnesses to others. Patients and visitors presenting with cough, runny nose, shortness of breath, fever, congestion, or sore throat will be required to wear a mask. Disposable masks will be available upon entry into the hospital.

The following information reflects GRM'S regular Visitation Guidelines.

UNDERAGED VISITORS

Visitors under the age of 12 are not permitted, except for Comfort Care patients. Please be advised that children under the age of 12 visiting Comfort Care patients, as well as visitors for any level of care under 18, must be supervised by an adult (18 years of age or older).

COVID-19 PATIENTS

All COVID-19 positive patients are still not permitted any visitors, except for pediatric patients in the Emergency Department, where one parent/guardian may be present.

MED-SURGICAL/ TELEMENTRY

Patients are allowed up to two (2) visitors between 9am and 9pm daily.

INTENSIVE CARE UNIT

Patients are allowed up to four (4) visitors every hour from 9am-10am, 10am-11am, 1pm-2pm; 2pm-3pm; 8pm-9pm. No visitors will be permitted from 11am to 1pm and from 3pm to 8pm. No switching will be permitted regardless of level of care.

APPOINTMENTS AND PROCEDURES (without hospital stay)

Outpatients are allowed one (1) adult companion (18 years or older).

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

Patients in the Emergency Department are allowed one (1) visitor. Switching will be allowed. Pediatric patients, both COVID-19 positive and negative, must be accompanied by a parent/guardian.

COMFORT CARE

Patients in Comfort Care are allowed up to five (5) visitors between 9am and 9pm daily. All visitors under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

MORGUE

There is no limit of visitors for viewings in the morgue. However, visitation is limited to two (2) hours.

GRMC strongly encourages continuing proper hygiene practices and vigilance in the spread of COVID-19. We thank the community for their cooperation and support as we navigate the evolving conditions of the island community. ***(PR)***

Nation

Saving democracy central to Biden's campaign messaging

» Will it resonate with swing state voters?

BETHLEHEM, Pa. (AP)—Just blocks from the shuttered Bethlehem Steel plant, the Hispanic Center Lehigh Valley was bustling on a recent day with scores of older people eating lunch. Downstairs, out of sight, a constant stream of visitors was shopping in its massive food pantry.

Over the past seven months, the number visitors to the pantry has risen by more than a third. The center's executive director, Raymond Santiago, sees that as a stark sign of something he has felt over the past couple years: Many in the area's Latino community are struggling to meet their basic needs.

AP

Raymond Santiago, executive director, Hispanic Center Lehigh Valley, poses for a photo during an interview, Thursday, Jan. 18, 2024, in Bethlehem, Penn.

Northampton County, which includes Bethlehem, is a traditional bellwether for Pennsylvania, one of the most important presidential swing states, and Latinos are a key part of the coalition that President Joe Biden is trying rebuild as he embarks on his campaign for a second term. In doing so, the Democrat might have challenges selling a crucial part of his reelection strategy.

One of the messages he has delivered in previous visits to Pennsylvania is that former President Donald Trump, the front-runner for the GOP nomination, is a danger to American democracy. Biden is hoping that message energizes the same voters who turned out four years ago, when Northampton County narrowly flipped to him after supporting Trump by a thin margin in 2016.

Based on his interactions with visitors to the Hispanic center, Santiago isn't so sure. It's the price of groceries and lack of affordable housing that dominate conversations there.

"I think so many people are already immune to that messaging, it won't land as cleanly this election as it did in 2020," he said. "If he keeps pushing that message, it might turn voters away."

Biden chose a location near Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, with its deep symbolism for the country's struggle for freedom, for his initial campaign event for 2024, portraying Trump as a grave threat to America and describing the general election as "all about" whether democracy can survive. It was a message similar to one he gave before the 2022 midterm elections at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, where the nation's founding documents were created. Biden warned that Trump and his followers threatened "the very foundation of our republic."

Biden has continued the theme during the early primary season, telling supporters winning a second term is essential for maintaining the country's democratic traditions.

Over the course of several days, The Associated Press interviewed a cross section of voters in Northampton County to ask whether Biden's messaging around the fate of democracy was resonating. These voters represented parts of the very coalition Biden will need to win Pennsylvania again—Black voters, Latinos, independents and moderates from both parties.

Their overarching response: The president's warning that a second Trump presidency will shred constitutional norms and destroy democratic institutions is not one that, alone, will motivate them and get them out to vote.

Like people across much of the rest of the country, most of those interviewed would prefer avoiding a rematch of the 2020 contest, and several suggested they would seriously consider a serious third-party candidate with a strong message and a chance of winning.

Evelyn Fermin, 74, who regularly visits the Lehigh Hispanic center, has lived in the county for two years after spending most of her life in New Jersey. Her opinion about Trump has been set since Jan. 6, 2021, when the former president's supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol in a violent bid to stop Congress from certifying Biden's win. But she doesn't think reminders of that day will be sufficient to persuade voters in November.

ACROSS THE NATION

Shooting deaths of 2 people in Colorado college dorm being investigated as homicides, police say

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (AP)—The deaths of two people who were shot in a dorm room at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs on Friday morning will be investigated as homicides, police said. The victims, who were not immediately identified, were found dead when police responded to a report of a shooting around 6 a.m. "At this point in our investigation, this incident does not appear to be a murder-suicide and both deaths are being investigated as homicides," the Colorado Springs Police Department said in a statement on social media Friday evening. The coroner's office will determine how they died, but each person was shot at least once in what appeared to be an "isolated incident," police spokesperson Ira Cronin said at a briefing.

Explosion at Virginia home kills 1 firefighter and injures 11 others, including 9 firefighters

STERLING, Va. (AP)—One firefighter was killed and nine others were injured when an explosion in a Washington, D.C., suburb on Friday leveled a home where they were investigating a gas leak. Two other people were also injured. The firefighters were called to the home in Sterling, Virginia, by a report of a gas smell shortly after 7:30 p.m. and a fiery explosion took place about 30 minutes later, fire officials said. The blast and fire occurred while firefighters were inside the building, James Williams, assistant chief of operations for Loudon County Fire and Rescue, said at a news conference.

"Soon after arrival, with firefighters inside, the house did explode," Williams said. One firefighter was killed, while nine firefighters and two others were taken to hospitals with injuries ranging from limited to severe, Williams said. "We have all firefighters out of the building. The fire will continue to smolder," Williams said. He described damage to the home as "total devastation." "There's a debris field well into the street and into the neighboring homes," he said. Williams said the cause of the fire was under investigation.

Another endangered whale was found dead off East Coast

Federal authorities said the second critically endangered North Atlantic right whale found dead in the last month showed injuries consistent with a collision with a ship. The whales number less than 360 and they have experienced decline in recent years. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said it was notified of a dead right whale floating off Savannah, Georgia, on Feb. 13. The agency said late Friday that a necropsy of the animal "found evidence of blunt force trauma including fractures of the skull" and that those "injuries are consistent with a vessel strike prior to death." The announcement came just days after NOAA released more details about a dead right whale off Massachusetts that showed signs of entanglement in fishing gear, which is the other major threat the animals face. The back-to-back deaths of the rare whales that both showed evidence of the species' two major threats should motivate rule changes, numerous environmental groups said Saturday. The groups have long pushed for stricter rules governing shipping and commercial fishing to help protect the whales. "The North Atlantic right whale's nursery is becoming a crime scene," said Greg Reilly, southeast marine campaigner for International Fund for Animal Welfare. ***(AP)***

Army Reserve soldiers, close friends killed in drone attack, mourned at funerals in Georgia

WAYCROSS, Ga. (AP)—Two young citizen-soldiers who became close friends after enlisting in the Army Reserve were remembered at funerals in southeast Georgia on Saturday, nearly three weeks after they died in a drone attack while deployed to the Middle East.

A service for 24-year-old Sgt. Kennedy Sanders was held in the packed 1,200-seat auditorium of Ware County Middle School in Waycross.

Fellow soldiers recalled Sanders' courage, her loving personality, and her willingness to volunteer for tasks few wanted to do, including learning to operate earth-moving equipment to help build roads and shelters, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported.

"Behind her smile was a fierce determination," Col. Jeffrey Dulgarian said during the service, adding that she "tackled her responsibility with vigor and skill."

Sanders' former basketball coach, Mandy Lingenfelter, remembered Sanders as a point guard for Ware County High's Lady Gators.

"It was hard for me to yell at her," Lingenfelter said, "because she was always smiling. … She had pure joy. She put Jesus first, others second and herself last."

A similar welcome marked the final homecoming for Sgt. Breonna Moffett, 23, in Savannah. Moffett's funeral at a Baptist church was scheduled for the same time Saturday as Sanders' service 100 miles (161 kilometers) away. Moffett's family requested that media not be present.

The soldiers were among three members of their Army Reserve unit who died Jan. 28 in a drone strike on a U.S. base in Jordan near the Syrian border. Also killed was Staff Sgt. William Jerome Rivers, 46, who was buried Tuesday following a church service in Carrollton.

The military awarded all three soldiers promotions in rank after their deaths. They were assigned to the 926th Engineer Battalion, 926th Engineer Brigade, based at Fort Moore in west Georgia.

According to the Army Reserve, Moffett and Sanders both enlisted in 2019 as construction engineers who use bulldozers and other heavy equipment to clear roads and construction sites.

By the time they deployed to the Middle East last year, the two had become close friends. Moffett's mother, Francine Moffett, said that whenever the family would call her daughter, they typically would hear from Sanders too.

When she wasn't serving in uniform, Moffett worked in Savannah for United Cerebral Palsy of Georgia, helping teach cooking and other skills to people with disabilities. She joined the Army Reserve after graduating from Windsor Forest High School, where she had been a drum major and JROTC cadet. She was killed just days after her 23rd birthday.

Sanders came from Waycross on the edge of the Okefenokee Swamp and worked at a local pharmacy. The former high school athlete helped coach children's basketball and soccer teams in her spare time. Her mother, Oneida Oliver-Sanders, said the last time they spoke, her daughter talked of wanting to buy a motorcycle when she came home.

The deaths of the three Georgia reservists were the first U.S. fatalities blamed on Iran-backed militia groups after months of intensified attacks on American forces in the region since the Israel-Hamas war began in October.

More than 40 troops were also injured in the drone attack at Tower 22, a secretive U.S. military desert outpost that enables U.S. forces to infiltrate and quietly leave Syria.

Asia

'Afghan women scared to go out alone'

ISLAMABAD (AP)—Afghan women feel scared or unsafe leaving their homes alone because of Taliban decrees and enforcement campaigns on clothing and male guardians, according to a report from the U.N. mission in Afghanistan.

» Due to Taliban decrees on clothing and male guardians

The report, issued Friday, comes days before a U.N.-convened meeting in the Qatari capital is set to start, with member states and special envoys to Afghanistan due to discuss engagement with the Taliban and the country's crises, including the human rights situation.

The Taliban—which took over Afghanistan in 2021 during the final weeks of U.S. and NATO withdrawal from the country—have barred women from most areas of public life and stopped girls from going to school beyond the sixth grade as part of harsh measures they imposed despite initial promises of a more moderate rule.

They are also restricting women's access to work, travel and health care if they are unmarried or don't have a male guardian, and arresting those who don't comply with the Taliban's interpretation of hijab, or Islamic headscarf.

The U.N. mission's report, published Friday, said the decrees are being enforced through arrest, harassment and intimidation. Women said they increasingly fear going to public spaces owing to the threat of arrest and the "long-lasting stigma and shame" associated with being taken into police custody.

Over half of the women interviewed for the report felt unsafe leaving the house without a male guardian, or mahram. Risks to their security and their anxiety levels worsened whenever a new decree was announced specifically targeting them, the report said.

Women who went out with a mahram felt safer but noted the stress from depending on another person to accompany them. Some said their male guardians chided them for "wasting time" if they wanted to visit certain shops or stray from a route limited to performing basic necessary tasks.

This undercut chances to "enjoy even micro-moments of stimulation or leisure" outside the home, said the report.

Some women said that male relatives were also afraid and reluctant to leave the home with female relatives, as this would expose them to Taliban harassment.

A spokesman from the Vice and Virtue Ministry, the Taliban's morality police that enforces such decrees, said it was "nonsense and untrue" that women are scared to go to the shops.

"There is no problem for those sisters (women) who have observed hijab," said Abdul Ghafar Farooq. "As women are naturally weaker than men, then Shariah (Islamic law) has called mahrams essential when traveling with them for the sake of their dignity and respect."

He said harassing women was against the law.

Indian farmers strike to demand guaranteed crop prices

NEW DELHI (AP)—Farmers blocked highways and held demonstrations in many rural areas in northern India on Friday to protest over a range of grievances that have also led tens of thousands to march toward the capital in tractors and wagons.

Farmers in the northern states of Haryana and Punjab held sit-ins near toll plazas on major highways in the strike, supported by some trade unions. Authorities advised commuters to plan routes carefully to avoid blocked roads.

Tens of thousands of farmers began a protest march toward New Delhi earlier this week to demand guaranteed prices for their produce, but were stopped by the police about 200 kilometers (125 miles) away from the capital. The farmers are camping on the border between Punjab and Haryana after being blocked by concrete and metal barricades. Police detained some protesters.

Authorities have also suspended mobile internet service in some areas of Haryana, blocked social media accounts of some protest leaders and used drones to drop tear gas canisters on the protesters.

The farmers' march comes two years after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government faced similar protests that continued for more than a year. At that time, farmers camped on the capital's outskirts to demonstrate against new agriculture laws that were later withdrawn.

At the heart of the latest protests is a demand for legislation that would guarantee minimum support prices for all farm produce.

Japan's new flagship H3 rocket reaches orbit in key test

TOKYO (AP)—Japan's flagship H3 rocket reached orbit and released two small observation satellites in a key second test following a failed debut launch last year, buoying hope for the country in the global space race.

The H3 rocket blasted off from the Tanegashima Space Center on time Saturday morning, two days after its originally scheduled liftoff was delayed by bad weather.

The rocket successfully reached orbit at an altitude of about 670 kilometers (about 420 miles) and released two satellites, the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, or JAXA, said.

"We feel so relieved to be able to announce the good results," JAXA President Hiroshi Yamakawa told a news conference.

The H3's main missions are to secure independent access to space and be competitive as international demand for satellite launches grows. "We made a big first step today toward achieving that goal," Yamakawa said.

The launch is a boost for Japan's space program following a recent streak of successes, including a historic precision touchdown on the moon of an unmanned spacecraft last month.

The liftoff was closely watched as a test for Japan's space development after H3, in its debut flight last March, failed to ignite the second-stage engine. JAXA and its main contractor Mitsubishi Heavy Industries have been developing H3 as a successor to its current mainstay, H-2A, which is set to retire after two more flights.

As the rocket soared and released its first payload successfully, project members at the JAXA command center cheered and hugged each other in livestreaming footage. NHK television showed some staff at a press center crying with relief and joy.

JAXA H3 project manager Masashi Okada called the result "perfect," saying H3 cleared all missions set for Saturday's flight. "After a long wait, the newborn H3 finally had its first cry."

"I now feel a heavy load taken off my shoulders. But now is the real start for H3, and we will work to steadily improve it," Okada said.

World

Navalny's team confirms his death

AP

A woman touches a photo of Alexei Navalny after laying flowers paying the last respect to him at the Memorial to Victims of Political Repression in St. Petersburg, Russia on Saturday, Feb. 17, 2024.

By EMMA BURROWS
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Alexei Navalny's spokesperson confirmed Saturday that the Russian opposition leader had died at a remote Arctic penal colony, saying he was "murdered," but it was unclear where his body was as his family and friends searched for answers.

» Says his mother is searching for his body

Navalny's death at age 47 has deprived the Russian opposition of its most well-known and inspiring politician less than a month before an election that will give President Vladimir Putin another six years in power.

Although neither the imprisoned anti-corruption crusader nor other Kremlin critics were in a position to challenge Putin for the presidency, the loss of Navalny was a crushing blow to Russians who had pinned their future hopes on Putin's seemingly indefatigable foe. It also prompted questions about what killed him. Russian officials told the politician's team Saturday that the cause of Navalny's death had not yet been established and that the results of a new investigation would be released next week, said Navalny spokesperson Kira Yarmysh. Navalny's mother was told that the body would not be released until those investigations were complete, she said. The decision has prompted speculation that the Russian authorities may be keen to hold on to the body in an attempt to cover up potential foul play. "They're driving us around in circles and covering their tracks," Yarmysh said.

A note handed to Navalny's mother stated that he died at 2:17 p.m. Friday, according to Yarmysh. Prison officials told his mother when she arrived at the penal colony Saturday that her son had perished from "sudden death syndrome," Ivan Zhdanov, the director of Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation, wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter.

A prison colony employee said the body was taken to the nearby city of Salekhard as part of a post-mortem investigation, Yarmysh said. When Navalny's mother and one of the late politician's lawyers visited the morgue in Salekhard, it was closed, Navalny's team wrote on its Telegram channel. But the lawyer called the morgue and was told the body was not there, his team said.

Mediator says talks on Gaza not 'progressing as expected' after momentum in recent weeks

RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP)—Talks on a potential cease-fire deal in Gaza "have not been progressing as expected" in the past few days after good progress in recent weeks, key mediator Qatar said Saturday, as Israel's prime minister accused the Hamas militant group of not changing its "delusional" demands.

Speaking during the Munich Security Conference, Qatar's prime minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdurrahman Al Thani, noted difficulties in the "humanitarian part" of the negotiations.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is under pressure to bring home remaining hostages taken in the Oct. 7 Hamas attack, said he sent a delegation to cease-fire talks in Cairo earlier in the week at U.S. President Joe Biden's request but doesn't see the point in sending them again.

Hamas wants a permanent cease-fire in Gaza and the release of Palestinians held by Israel.

Netanyahu also pushed back against international concern about a planned Israeli ground offensive in Rafah, a city on southern Gaza's border with Egypt. He said "total victory" against Hamas requires the offensive, once people living there evacuate to safe areas. Where they will go in largely devastated Gaza is not clear.

New airstrikes in central Gaza on Saturday killed more than 40 people, including children, and wounded at least 50, according to Associated Press journalists and hospital officials. Israel's military said it carried out strikes there against Hamas.

Five people were killed in an Israeli airstrike that targeted a house outside Khan Younis in the south, according to health officials, and another five people, including three children, were killed in an airstrike on a building north of Rafah. Dr. Marwan al-Hams, director of Abu Yousef al-Najjar Hospital, said other bodies were being pulled from the rubble.

Israel's air and ground offensive was triggered by the Oct. 7 attack that killed some 1,200 people in Israel and took 250 others hostage.

Health & Wellness

What high triglycerides mean and why it matters to your heart

By DEB BALZER
Mayo Clinic News Network

You may be familiar with high-density, or good cholesterol; low-density lipoproteins (LDL), or bad cholesterol; and their connections to heart health. But what about triglycerides? Often that word gets skimmed over when talking about cholesterol levels.

Dr. Regis Fernandes, a Mayo Clinic cardiologist, says triglycerides provide the body with energy from food. High levels can indicate signs of other conditions, like diabetes or prediabetes, that can increase the risk of heart disease and stroke.

Triglycerides, the main kind of fat in your body, store extra energy from the food you eat.

"It's an energy source. It's like a little battery used for energy. But too many triglycerides can also cause heart disease," says Dr. Fernandes.

Triglycerides, the main kind of fat in your body, store extra energy from the food you eat.

"It's an energy source. It's like a little battery used for energy. But too many triglycerides can also cause heart disease," says Dr. Fernandes.

People who are overweight, in general, have high triglyceride levels and good cholesterol levels that are low.

"They may get heart disease not because their LDL is high, they get heart disease because the HDL is low and the triglycerides is high," he says.

And this is significant for people in their 30s and 40s.

So what can you do? Reducing simple carbohydrates, such as refined sugars and flours, can help lower your weight and improve your cholesterol and triglyceride levels. And you can back that up with exercise.

"One of the best ways to lower triglyceride levels is to exercise. Also, exercise helps to lose weight. And when you lose weight, your triglycerides improve a lot," says Dr. Fernandes.

Tips to lower triglycerides

- Aim for 30 minutes of exercise most days.
- Cut sugar and refined carbs.
- Lose weight and focus on reducing calories.
- Choose healthier fats like olive oil and fish that are rich in omega-3.
- Limit alcohol, which can be high in calories and sugar.

Medications, including statins, may be prescribed if lifestyle modifications don't help.

Stressed about your child's screen time?

For decades, the American Academy of Pediatrics has been studying the effects screens and media have on children. It's natural for parents and caregivers to be concerned about how much screen time their children are getting, especially when digital screens are everywhere, even at school. Dr. Nusheen Ameenuddin, a Mayo Clinic pediatrician and member of the AAP, shares some recommendations to make it simple for families to manage their technology use.

"The key thing that I would want all parents to know is that screens aren't all good or all bad. A lot of this depends on how you use screens," says Dr. Ameenuddin.

Dr. Ameenuddin says there's no evidence that television shows or screen time for young kids have any benefit. Therefore, it's best to try to avoid screen time for kids under 2 years old, with the exception of video chatting with grandparents or other relatives.

"For kids who are between 2 and 5 years of age, no more than about one hour of high-quality educational content, ideally with little to no commercial time," she says.

For kids 5 and older, it's a little more nuanced.

"Once kids are 5 years and older, and they're in school, we used to say no more than two hours of screen time a day of noneducational content. But we understand that that's hard to do. And then oftentimes kids are using screens for really good reasons, for doing schoolwork. So really, what we've started to say is let's make sure it is not taking the place of other important activities, whether that's schoolwork or physical activity, and certainly sleep," says Dr. Ameenuddin.

"There is potentially a benefit for children in the preschool age with high-quality educational content. There are wonderful shows that have been around for decades that are really focused on teaching kids," she says.

Dr. Ameenuddin says a little bit of high-quality television can help kids learn about other people and cultures.

"There was actually a study done, and as much as we talk about how we don't want to spend a lot of time in front of screens, there is a benefit. There can be diversity enhancement. When children see children of other backgrounds playing with each other, they're actually more likely to say, when shown a group of pictures, that they might want to play with a child of a different background from what they might be used to or from their own background," says Dr. Ameenuddin.

One of the resources Dr. Ameenuddin recommends for finding quality media content is Common Sense Media. It's a resource that includes ratings and reviews of TV shows, movies, video games, podcasts and more. ***(Mayo Clinic News Network)***

Healthy Living

Cocoa for your heart

Just one cup of cocoa a day may help prevent the formation of blood clots in arteries.

What's in the cocoa bean?

- **Flavonoids,** or plant pigments, which may help prevent cardiovascular disease
- **Polyphenols,** antioxidants that may inhibit clotting

Source: Southampton General Hospital, TNS Photo Service

Red flags for heart failure during pregnancy

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for women in the U.S. Deaths from heart disease in women who are pregnant or delivered a baby within one year has increased over the previous 30 years.

Dr. Demilade Adedinsewo a Mayo Clinic cardiologist, explains the red flags for heart failure during pregnancy and how healthcare professionals are working to detect the condition earlier.

What may appear as normal symptoms during pregnancy may overlap with red flags for heart failure.

"(Symptoms can include) lower extremity swelling, shortness of breath with walking short distances or shortness of breath when laying in the bed flat on your back at night," says Dr. Adedinsewo.

Delays in diagnosis can be deadly. And some who are pregnant have an even greater risk of developing heart failure.

"There is a unique form of heart failure that occurs during pregnancy and shortly after having a baby called peripartum cardiomyopathy," says Dr. Adedinsewo. "Black women have up to a sixteenfold risk of developing this condition, compared to white women."

Eating a healthy diet, exercising, getting enough sleep and not smoking can lower risks. Dr. Adedinsewo recommends attending regular appointments with your healthcare team and checking blood glucose and blood lipids.

"If we are able to test and evaluate a tool that can use something as simple as an EKG to identify a woman who's pregnant and at high risk of having heart failure, we can initiate appropriate therapies and reduce the risk of dying during this time period," she says. ***(Mayo Clinic News Network)***

Life & Style

Paul McCartney's stolen bass is returned after more than 50 years

LONDON (AP)—Paul McCartney no longer gently weeps for his original bass guitar.

A five-year search by the manufacturer of the instrument that was aided by a husband-and-wife team of journalists helped reunite The Beatles star with the distinctive violin-shaped 1961 electric Höfner that went missing a half century ago and is estimated to be worth 10 million pounds ($12.6 million).

McCartney had asked Höfner to help find the missing instrument that helped launch Beatlemania across the universe, Scott Jones, a journalist who teamed up with Höfner executive Nick Wass to track it down, said Friday.

"Paul said to me, 'Hey, because you're from Höfner, couldn't you help find my bass?'" Wass said. "And that's what sparked this great hunt. Sitting there, seeing what the lost bass means to Paul, I was determined to solve the mystery."

McCartney bought the bass for about 30 pounds ($37) in 1961 when The Beatles were developing their chops during a series of residencies in Hamburg, Germany. The instrument was played on the Beatles first two records and featured on hits such as "Love Me Do," "Twist and Shout," and "She Loves You."

"Because I was left-handed, it looked less daft because it was symmetrical," McCartney once said. "I got into that. And once I bought it, I fell in love with it."

It was rumored to have been stolen around the time The Beatles were recording their final album, "Let it Be," in 1969. But no one was sure when it went missing.

What began as a long and winding road for Wass to track down the bass picked up speed when Jones serendipitously joined the hunt after seeing McCartney headline the Glastonbury Festival in 2022. The stage lights at one point seemed to illuminate nothing but the sunburst pattern on his bass and Jones wondered if it was the same instrument McCartney had played in the early '60s.

When he later searched the internet he was stunned to find the original bass was missing and there was a search for it.

"I was staggered, I was amazed," Jones said. "I think we live in a world where The Beatles could do almost anything and it would get a lot of attention."

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Jennifer Lopez, Bad Bunny, Chris Hemsworth and Zendaya to chair 2024 Met Gala

NEW YORK (AP)—Jennifer Lopez, Bad Bunny, Chris Hemsworth and Zendaya will join Vogue's Anna Wintour as co-chairs of this year's Met Gala, the magazine and the Metropolitan Museum of Art revealed Thursday. And the dress code? "The Garden of Time," whatever that means in the imaginations of the star-studded crowd that will ascend the museum's grand steps on the first Monday in May at the splashy benefit. The dress code ties into the theme of this year's May 6 gala, which aligns with the spring exhibition at the Met's Costume Institute. This year's theme is "Sleeping Beauties: Reawakening Fashion." The reference is not to the fairytale, though, but to treasured garments from the vast collection at the Costume Institute—some too fragile to hang upright. Museum curators will place them in glass cases, like Sleeping Beauty herself.

Prince Harry says he jumped on a plane to London after learning of King Charles III's cancer

LONDON (AP)—Prince Harry said Friday that he immediately arranged to go to London after his father, King Charles III, called to tell him he had cancer. "I jumped on a plane and went to go see him as soon as I could," Harry told the news program "Good Morning America." "I love my family. The fact that I was able to get on a plane and go see and spend any time with him, I'm grateful for that."Harry arrived from California less than 48 hours after Buckingham Palace announced on Feb. 5 that the king had cancer and had begun treatment. The visit between the monarch and his younger son at Clarence House was relatively brief, as Charles and his wife, Queen Camilla, were seen leaving about an hour later. The palace has not revealed the type of cancer the 75-year-old king has, saying only that it was discovered during a treatment for an enlarged prostate but isn't prostate cancer.

Brian Wilson needs to be put in conservatorship after death of wife, court petition says

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The management team of Brian Wilson has petitioned to place him in a conservatorship because of his mental decline and the recent death of his wife, Melinda Ledbetter Wilson, who managed his daily life. The 81-year-old Beach Boys co-founder and mastermind has a "major neurocognitive disorder" and is taking medication for dementia, according to a doctor's declaration filed with the petition Wednesday in Los Angeles Superior Court. The petition asks a judge to appoint two longtime Wilson representatives—publicist Jean Sievers and manager LeeAnn Hard—to be conservators overseeing his personal and medical decisions because "Mr. Wilson is unable to properly provide for his own personal needs for physical health, food, clothing, or shelter." The two women "have had a close relationship with Mr. and Mrs. Wilson for many years, and Mr. Wilson trusts them," according to the filing. Ledbetter—whose husband credited her with stabilizing his famously troubled life—had managed his daily needs before her death on Jan. 30, the petition says.

George Santos sues late-night host Jimmy Kimmel for tricking him into making videos to ridicule him

NEW YORK (AP)—Former U.S. Rep. George Santos alleged in a lawsuit filed Saturday that late-night host Jimmy Kimmel deceived him into making videos on the Cameo app that were used to ridicule the disgraced New York Republican on the show. The lawsuit filed in U.S. district court for the southern district of New York names Kimmel, ABC and Walt Disney Co. as defendants. A Disney representative listed as a media contact for the Jimmy Kimmel Live! show didn't immediately respond to an email from The Associated Press seeking comment. Santos, who was expelled from the House of Representatives last year after being charged with multiple counts of fraud and stealing from donors, is suing over alleged copyright infringement, fraudulent inducement, breach of contract and unjust enrichment. Kimmel misrepresented himself to induce Santos to create personalized videos "capitalizing on and ridiculing" his "gregarious personality," the lawsuit alleges.

Taylor Swift donates $100K to family of woman killed in Chiefs parade shooting

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—Taylor Swift donated $100,000 to the family of Lisa Lopez-Galvan, the woman killed in the shooting at the Kansas City Chiefs' Super Bowl victory parade.

Swift

Two $50,000 donations were posted Friday under the singer's name on a GoFundMe page. Swift's representative confirmed the donations to Variety, the trade publication reported, and The Associated Press independently verified the posts.

"Sending my deepest sympathies and condolences in the wake of your devastating loss. With love, Taylor Swift," read the messages accompanying the posts.

Lopez-Galvan, 43, was shot Wednesday as she celebrated the Chiefs' Super Bowl win with her husband, young adult son and hundreds of thousands of other fans at the city's Union Station. Lopez-Galvan hosted "Taste of Tejano" on local radio station KKFI-FM, as Lisa G. The mother of two had deep roots in Kansas City, and was one of the few Latina DJs in the area.

"She was an amazing mother, wife, daughter, sister, aunt, cousin, and friend to so many. We ask that you continue to keep her family in your prayers as we grieve the loss of her life," the GoFundMe description reads. The fundraised had amassed over $200,000 as of Friday morning.

Twenty-two others, half of whom were under 16, were wounded in the shooting. Investigators are still trying to identify who is responsible, but say a dispute may have led to the shooting. Police have two juveniles in custody and are trying to determine whether others were involved.

Girlfriend of three years learns the horrible truth

DEAR ABBY: For nearly three years, I have been seeing a man who later asked me to move in with him. He abruptly stopped emailing me four months ago. I waited several weeks and then emailed him, telling him how upset and hurt I was and asking what was going on. I found out—NOT from him—that he has been in a relationship with another woman for the last five years. I am furious! I am at a loss about what I should do.

SHATTERED IN OREGON

DEAR SHATTERED: The man may have abruptly stopped communicating with you because the woman he has been involved with found out about the romance he was having with you. Have you heard from him since? (If not, she may have rendered him speechless.) It's important you find a way to discharge some of your righteous anger. Believe it or not, physical exercise can help. Talking to friends or a therapist may also lessen the urge to explode. Learn whatever lesson there is to learn from this and move on. Do NOT let it rule your life. Everyone makes mistakes, and he was one.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: Without consulting me, my husband gave my father's U.S. Army uniform to my brother complete with honor patches. My sister-in-law now wears it as a fashion statement, saying that she is a "Sullivan." This is not sitting well with me. She is only a Sullivan by marriage.

I feel it is disgraceful to prance around in something you haven't earned, and it's insulting not just to my late father, but to all who have served. Her father also served, but she isn't wearing his uniform.

DISRESPECTED IN THE MIDWEST

DEAR DISRESPECTED: Your husband should not have given YOUR brother the uniform without first consulting you because it wasn't his property to give. What your SIL is doing with it seems less like a fashion statement and more like an example of "stolen valor," which may be offensive to many people, particularly those who have served. It is not a crime by virtue of the fact that she isn't impersonating a soldier. But it would be in better taste for her to wear her own father's uniform rather than your dad's.

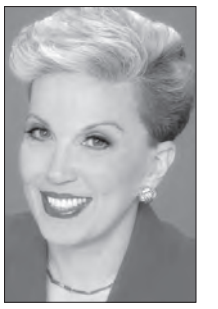
■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: What's the best way to deal with an "overgifter"? My friend of 10 years is one, often giving gifts beyond holidays and birthdays. Every time we hang out, she gives me something, either food or small trinkets. I asked her three years ago to tone it down. Two years ago, I sent her a letter saying I value our friendship and, for me, the best gift is quality time. She stopped for a while, but six months ago, she started up again.

Abby, I throw away all her gifts. They are usually stale or expired foodstuffs or trinkets I don't have the space to store. I'm trying to find a way to make my boundaries clear. But I don't want to hurt her feelings in the process.

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

TOO MUCH IN WASHINGTON

DEAR TOO MUCH: Because your friend may have forgotten, remind her that you do not want her giving these gifts and that the most treasured gift she can give you is time with her. Explain that her continuing to do it is making you UNCOMFORTABLE. Then cross your fingers and hope that this time she gets the message. If she doesn't, you will have to remind her yet again.

■ ■ ■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

McClung wins 2nd straight NBA Slam Dunk Contest title

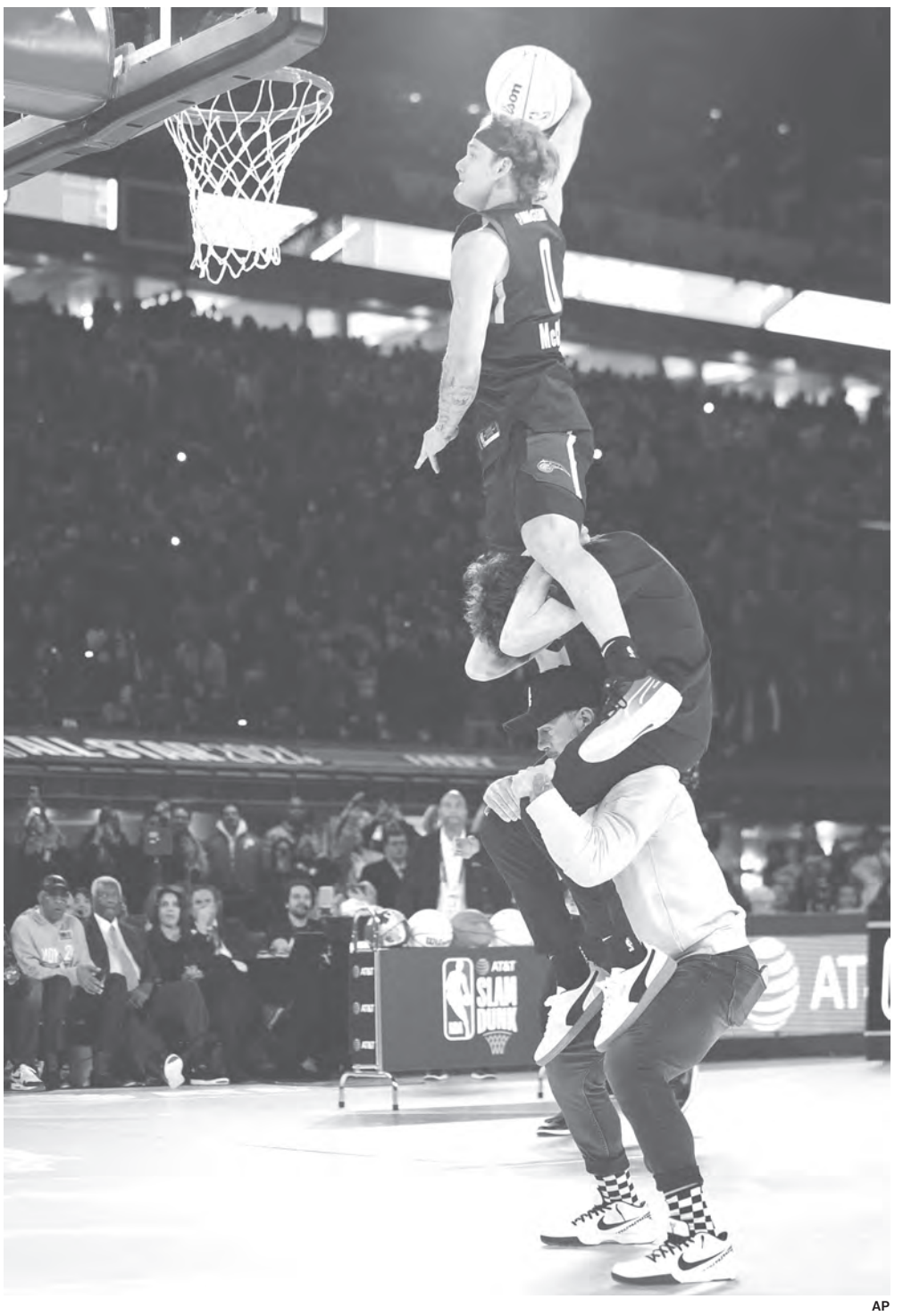
INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—G-League champion Mac McClung won his second straight Slam Dunk Contest by grabbing the ball out of Shaquille O'Neal's hands and leaping over him to draw five perfect scores on his final attempt.

McClung finished with 98.8 points on his final two dunks, one point ahead of Boston Celtics All-Star Jaylen Brown.

McClung became the sixth player to win the contest twice and the first to do it in back-to-back seasons since Zach LaVine in 2015 and 2016.

McClung needed a big score after Brown drew an average of 49.2 on his final dunk over another person with a sequin glove covering the left hand he used.

McClung jumped over two people in his first dunk of the final round. Brown paid tribute to the late Terrence Clark, a Massachusetts prep star who died in a car crash at age 19 in April 2021.



AP

Osceola Magic's Mac McClung dunks during the slam dunk competition at the NBA basketball All-Star weekend, Saturday, Feb. 17, 2024, in Indianapolis.

3-POINT CONTEST

Milwaukee Bucks star Damian Lillard defended his NBA 3-point contest title by finishing with 26 points in the final round during All-Star Saturday night.

Lillard, who won with Portland last season, became the eighth player to win at least two 3-point crowns and the first since Jason Kapono in 2007 and 2008 to do it in consecutive years.

This one nearly ended without Lillard advancing to the final round. Four players—Lillard, Tre Young of Atlanta, Tyrese Haliburton of Indiana and Karl Anthony-Towns of Minnesota—finished in a tie for the three spots in the last round. Haliburton was eliminated in the tiebreaking round with 12 points.

Then in the final, Young and Towns each put up 24 points, giving Lillard a chance to win it with a late shooting flurry that gave him the title.

The final event of the night, the Slam Dunk Contest, was set to begin later.

SKILLS CHALLENGE

Haliburton, a two-time All-Star, made the tiebreaking half-court shot with 20.5 seconds left in a timed contest Saturday night to give Team Pacers the NBA's Skills Challenge crown over Team All-Stars.

Haliburton, Myles Turner and Bennedict Mathurin teamed up to win the night's first two competitions—the team relay and the passing competition—at Lucas Oil Stadium, just a short walk from their home arena.

Team All-Stars' win in the shooting contest tied the score at 200, forcing the tiebreaker.

It took Team All-Stars 58.8 seconds to make its first half-court shot. Haliburton needed just 38.3 seconds for a win that continued a big weekend for the Pacers, who are hosting their first All-Star weekend since 1985.

Mathurin was selected MVP of Friday night's Rising Stars game after leading Team Jalen past Team Detlef, a game that pitted two former Pacers players as coaches—Jalen Rose and Detlef Schrempf.

Adebayo will start All-Star Game, replacing injured Embiid

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—A new honor is awaiting Miami's Bam Adebayo: He'll be an All-Star starter for the first time.

Adebayo was announced Saturday as the replacement for Philadelphia's Joel Embiid in the Eastern Conference starting lineup for Sunday night's NBA All-Star Game. Embiid—the reigning MVP and two-time defending scoring champion—is missing the game because of a knee injury.

Milwaukee coach Doc Rivers, who will lead the East team in the All-Star Game, made the selection and informed Adebayo on Saturday morning. Adebayo said the conversation was brief and direct: "He walked in and was like, 'Bam, you're starting,'" he said.

"It's going to be a dope experience," Adebayo said. "Just going to really cherish that moment and thankful to God and all the people who support me through all the ups and downs. We've added something new to our list."

Adebayo made the All-Star team this season as a reserve selected by coaches, just as he did in 2020—when he also won the skills competition at All-Star weekend—and 2023. He'll become the seventh player to be an All-Star starter as a member of the Heat and the first since Dwyane Wade in 2016.

Shaquille O'Neal, LeBron James, Chris Bosh, Alonzo Mourning and Anthony Mason also were All-Star starters as members of the Heat. Mason was an injury replacement for Grant Hill in 2001; Bosh was an injury replacement for Rajon Rondo in 2013.

"My lineup decision was easy," Rivers said. "I looked at Big Joel out, what other (center) do we have on the team, and Bam got the honor. It's good for him, too. It's funny, I told him in locker room. He didn't know. I thought he knew because I told the league yesterday that he did know. You could tell he was very happy about it."

Adebayo—a member of the U.S. Olympic team that won gold at the Tokyo Games in 2021 and someone expected to be part of the team that will seek a fifth consecutive gold medal at the Paris Olympics this summer—is a four-time All-Defensive team member. He has finished no worse than fifth in the defensive player of the year voting in each of the last four seasons.

Adebayo is averaging 20.2 points, 10.6 rebounds, 4.2 assists, 1.1 steals and 1 block per game this season, his seventh with the Heat and his first as Miami's captain. No Heat player has ever finished a season with all those averages and only two other players are averaging at least that much in all five categories this season—Embiid and Milwaukee All-Star forward Giannis Antetokounmpo.

Stephen Curry tops Sabrina Ionescu in 3-point shootout at All-Star weekend

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Stephen Curry was on a roll—and it was barely enough to beat Sabrina Ionescu.

And fittingly, he won by three.

The Golden State star and NBA's all-time 3-point king beat Ionescu 29-26 in the Steph vs. Sabrina competition at All-Star Saturday night, the first such him-vs.-her event of its kind at the league's weekend showcase.

"For us to deliver a show like that, it was perfect," Curry said. "As much excitement as you can build in that short amount of time with two great shooters going at it. This is something we'll remember for a long time."

Ionescu won the WNBA's 3-point shootout at its All-Star weekend last year with a record 37 points, smashing Curry's NBA shootout mark of 31 points. From there, a challenge was thrown down and the plan was concocted for them to meet at All-Star weekend.

So they did, and it felt like the main event of the night.

"Hopefully, this isn't the last time we do this," Ionescu said.

Given how the fans—and really, everybody from both the NBA and WNBA—seemed to love it, it likely won't be the last time, especially since Curry and Ionescu talked afterward about adding partners to the mix next year when All-Star weekend just happens to be in San Francisco, the area where he plays and she calls home.

Curry's prize was a championship belt, with images of goats—as in, GOATs—on either side.

And he's the shooting GOAT, without question. But Ionescu, the New York Liberty star, almost gave him more than he could handle.

Ionescu went first and made 18 of 27 shots—starting 7 for 7. Some of them were worth one point, some worth two, giving her a total of 26 points.

She shot from the NBA 3-point line, which is roughly 12 to 18 inches farther from the basket than the WNBA line, depending on the area of the floor. Ionescu used a WNBA ball, which is slightly smaller than the NBA ball Curry used.

Curry had to rally a bit at the end, making nine of his last 10 to finish off the win.

Combined, they shot 39 for 54 (72%) in a contest with unconventional elements like a lime-green glass floor in a football stadium with the world watching.

"This was so authentic for the both of us to be able to be here, finally not in a closed gym, shooting in front of everyone watching and understanding what it means for ourselves but also the bigger picture," said Ionescu, who has beaten Curry in a H-O-R-S-E competition before without millions of people watching on television. "This is where I wanted to be. ... It's changed the landscape of how people view what we're doing."

There's no rivalry between the two, even though Curry heckled Ionescu during her rehearsal shooting session on Friday. He was booing her as she shot.

"Trying to apply some pressure, for sure," Curry said.

The reality is he's been inspiring Ionescu for more than half her life. Ionescu's family had season tickets to Warriors games. He gave her a high-five once when he was in the tunnel connecting the locker room and the court. She had a photo of him as her screensaver.

Years later, when Ionescu was starring at Oregon, she was the one high-fiving Curry's daughters—who love her. And on Saturday, Ionescu said the experience of just being part of something so unique on the All-Star stage taught her a key lesson.

"To just keep believing in myself," she said. "You know, 10 years ago, I never would have thought this was possible. And so being able to be up here ... it's a blessing and an opportunity to even be in the same conversation as Steph and to be able to see how much he's respected me as a player and a basketball player and a person to want to come out here and do this."

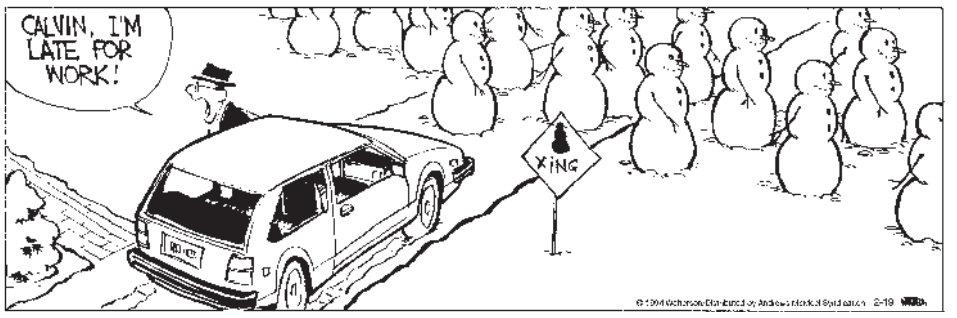
The competition raised money for each of their foundations, and when it was over, Curry left with the belt—but they both left more than happy.

"I don't know what's going to come out of it, but me and Sabrina talked about how cool of an opportunity it is to do something that's never been done before in our game," Curry said. "And for her to have a presence on this stage is going to do a lot to inspire the next generation of young boys and girls that want to compete and see themselves in either one of us. Wherever it goes from there, we know we can kind of plant our flag as doing something really special."

Pastimes

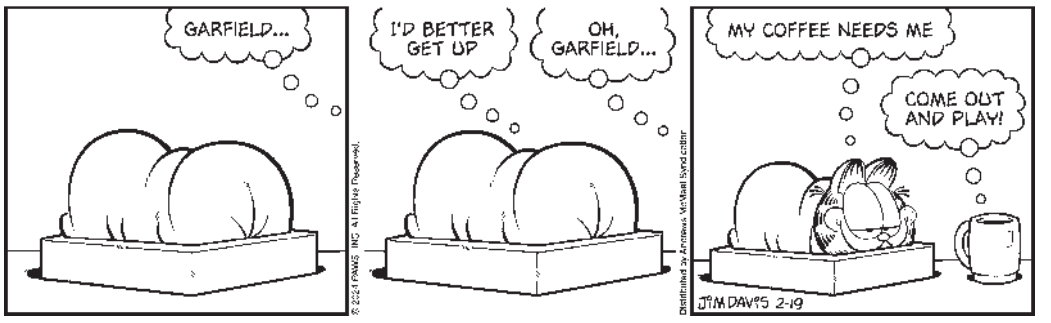
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



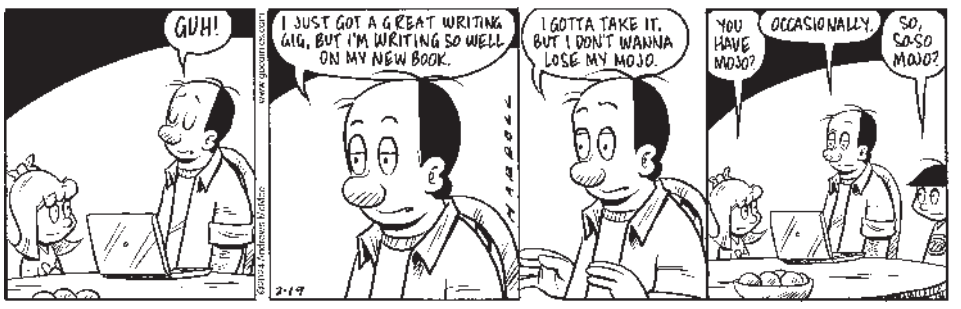
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


GUH!
I JUST GOT A GREAT WRITING GIG, BUT I'M WRITING SO WELL ON MY NEW BOOK.
I GOTTA TAKE IT. BUT I DON'T WANNA LOSE MY MOJO.
YOU HAVE MOJO?
OCCASIONALLY.
SO, SO-SO MOJO?
2-19

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

FANG! WHAT IS TAKING SO LONG?
WHY CAN'T YOU BE MORE PATIENT? A GOOD MEAL TAKES TIME TO PREPARE!
WELL, EXCUSE ME, I'M SURE THIS BALONEY SANDWICH IS EXQUISITE!

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 "Break My Heart" singer Dua
5 "Keep it down!"
8 Wine (Pref.)
12 Trucker with a handle
13 Misery
14 Lost traction
15 Like Beethoven
16 Control tower locale
18 Narrow waterway
20 River boats
21 Queue after Q
23 — Maria (coffee liqueur)
24 Fuel-producing area
28 Crisp cookie
31 "Where — you?"
32 Yemeni capital
34 Dove's call
35 New Mexico resort
37 "Super Fly" singer Curtis
39 Fanatic
41 Numbered rds.
42 Frightens
45 Baby hooters
49 President after Hayes
51 Together, in music
52 Shoppe descriptor
53 Small battery
54 Supreme Court count
55 Suitable
56 Gift from Santa
57 Profound

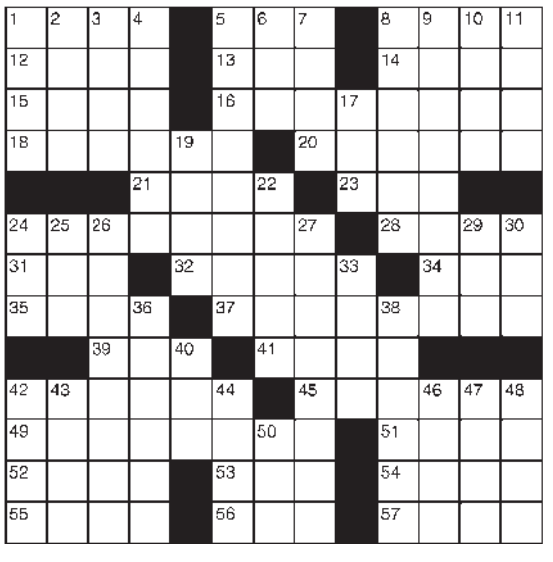
DOWN

1 Some TV screens
2 "Yeah, right"
3 Anjou, for one
4 Dog barks
5 Elite police unit
6 — polloi
7 Basil or thyme
8 Egyptian deity
9 Classy quality
10 Aswan's river
11 Probability
17 — Tuesday
19 Mother of Horus
22 Of an arm bone
24 Muffin type
25 Nest egg letters
26 "Mona Lisa" painter
27 Routine
29 Gmail alternative
30 Group of seals
33 Not many
36 Rode the waves
38 Vacation spot
40 Texter's "Enough!"
42 Enthusiastic
43 Film composer Schifrin
44 Plane reservation
46 Actress Falco
47 Melody
48 Leak out slowly
50 Asian language

Solution time: 21 mins.

I	O	N		R	S	V	P		A	M	O	S
A	M	C		F	I	I	A		R	A	D	S
B	E	I	N	V	E	N	I		E	X	E	S
I	N	S	O	L	E		I	D	A			
			W	O	K		F	A	S	T	F	R
C	S	P	A	N		A	N	Y		O	V	O
R	E	L	Y		A	Z	T		C	N	E	T
A	N	O		D	U	O		C	H	E	R	I
B	D	W	O	N	G		B	R	A			
			L	A	M		A	U	S	S	I	E
S	P	U	D		E	A	S	E	M	E	N	T
K	E	R	I		N	Y	F	T		F	C	O
Y	A	L	E		T	E	D	S		P	A	N

Last Friday's Answer



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Benicio Del Toro, 57; Seal, 61; Jeff Daniels, 69; Smokey Robinson, 84.

Happy Birthday: Persistence will get you where you want to go without interference. Stick close to home, find what works best for you and eliminate dead weight. Step back and get a clear picture of where your money goes and what you can do to save it. Get your facts straight and stick to the rules to avoid costly penalties. Say no to temptation. Your numbers are 4, 18, 21, 23, 30, 37, 48.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Don't take on an emotional battle you aren't ready to lose. Do your due diligence, find out where your allies stand and don't disclose information that someone may use against you. Use your intelligence, not your brawn, if you want to win. ✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Don't believe everything you hear. Let your curiosity take over and your direct questions help differentiate between truth and fiction. Call on trusted allies to step in and help you turn your ideas into something tangible. Your reputation will depend on consistency and integrity. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Don't learn the hard way. Question everything and everyone, and go to the source if you want the lowdown. Don't feel you have to exaggerate to grab someone's attention. A direct approach will help you attract legitimate candidates to help you reach your goal. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Work alongside people who share your concerns. You can make a difference if you take an innovative approach to change. Use your experience and intuition to drum up enthusiasm and the hands-on help and support you need. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Someone you think you can trust will have a hidden agenda that will take you by surprise. Keep an open mind, but don't sign on the dotted line unless you have read the fine print. A poker face will help with negotiations. Reveal only what's necessary. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Changing your daily routine will give you more time to learn something new. Keeping up with trends will make you a valuable employee or community contributor. Don't be afraid to highlight your skills. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* An energetic approach to fixing your digs will ward off tension and help you bring about changes that will lower your overhead. A disciplined approach to money, health and legal matters will set up roadblocks for anyone trying to scam you or tamper with your personal affairs. ✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Go on a learning expedition. Find out all you can before starting a discussion with someone who uses pressure tactics in order to talk you into something that makes you uncomfortable. Turn your attention to stabilizing your home environment. ✪✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Emotional problems will escalate if you or someone close to you isn't honest regarding intentions or feelings. Be sure to stick to the facts, be precise and ask questions when someone confuses you. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Don't be afraid to test your options before moving. Let your heart and intuition guide you, and you will recognize and eliminate barriers before they can turn into something problematic. Avoid overreacting, overspending and making premature decisions. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* When dealing with friends, relatives and associates, keep your wits about you. Someone will be unpredictable, misleading or ask for something you don't want to deliver. Someone will withhold pertinent information. Walk away from extravagant situations and people. Stick to those you love and trust. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* A kind gesture will bring you joy and respect. An open-door policy that makes others feel comfortable in your environment will help you gain support to fight issues that concern you. A disciplined approach to how you handle money and responsibilities will pay off. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are steadfast, optimistic and generous. You are helpful and reputable.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	9		3	5	6			8
		8	1			6		
1			7				9	3
	7				1			
	8	3			9		4	
		1			2	3	6	
7		4	8		3			1
3		5	9			8	2	6
8		9	2				3	4

Difficulty: ★ 2/19

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

5	6	4	7	9	2	1	8	3
3	1	9	5	8	4	7	6	2
7	8	2	6	1	3	4	5	9
1	4	5	3	2	8	9	7	6
8	9	6	4	5	7	2	3	1
2	3	7	9	6	1	5	4	8
9	7	8	1	3	5	6	2	4
6	5	3	2	4	9	8	1	7
4	2	1	8	7	6	3	9	5

Difficulty: ★★★★ 2/16

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

WHAT TO DO ON A FAMILY DAY? Solution: 10 letters

G	N	I	Z	A	G	R	A	T	S	N	A	C	K	S
E	S	C	A	P	E	R	O	O	M	L	U	N	C	H
D	N	E	K	E	E	W	S	I	S	T	E	R	O	O
G	P	V	I	K	L	A	W	E	H	P	E	N	U	P
N	O	B	A	K	I	N	G	G	B	T	E	I	S	P
I	O	A	(H)	C	O	P	N	R	N	I	K	E	I	I
D	L	R	(I)	C	A	O	O	E	Y	I	I	C	N	N
R	A	B	(K)	C	A	T	C	T	D	L	B	E	S	G
A	V	E	(E)	T	H	E	I	H	B	R	O	U	I	N
O	I	C	O	E	C	N	B	O	A	N	A	V	T	I
B	N	U	R	N	U	M	O	A	N	R	R	G	E	K
W	R	E	E	M	R	K	N	Y	T	R	A	P	S	O
O	A	I	M	A	L	L	D	L	I	H	C	D	T	O
N	C	O	F	Y	B	O	A	R	D	G	A	M	E	C
S	C	A	V	E	N	G	E	R	H	U	N	T	P	S

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Last Friday's Answer: Hacks

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Ecstatic Super Bowl rally, upended by the terror of a mass shooting

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—"Are you feeling good today, Chiefs Kingdom?" Kansas City Mayor Quinton Lucas shouted to a sea of football fans fresh from their town's third Super Bowl victory in five years.

Less than an hour later—with music still blaring and the confetti of celebration still hanging in the air—the mayor and throngs of others were running from gunfire, unsure where it was coming from, desperately seeking safety.

At its highest moment of community pride, Kansas City experienced one of 21st-century American culture's most traumatic events—a public mass shooting. By the time it was over, one woman was dead and nearly two dozen other people were wounded.

Police now blame a dispute among several people. On Friday, authorities said two juveniles were charged with gun-related and resisting arrest charges. Additional charges are expected.

Wednesday's shootings lasted only moments, their immediate aftermath only a couple hours. But in its wake, the event left a knocked-back community struggling to make sense of how something so positive could turn so quickly into something so terrifying and sad.

As the mayor put it later: "This is absolutely a tragedy, the likes of which we would have never expected in Kansas City, and the likes of which we'll remember for some time."

AP

A law enforcement officer stands amid debris as he looks around the scene following a shooting at the Kansas City Chiefs NFL football Super Bowl celebration in Kansas City, Mo., Wednesday, Feb. 14, 2024.

A DAY OF HIGH SPIRITS, AT THE BEGINNING

The relationship between local fans and their sports teams is often an intense one. And nowhere more so than at this particular moment in history in this particular town, where talent and luck and success and civic pride blended into an enthusiastic cocktail—one that made sure the festivities Wednesday began on a happy and light note.

For many young fans, the top question was whether Taylor Swift would join her tight-end boyfriend Travis Kelce for the Valentine's Day festivities. Fans and tabloids breathlessly followed the path of her plane, showing it had landed in Melbourne, Australia, where she had a concert scheduled. That meant she was absent as double-decker red buses rolled down the 2-mile (3.2-kilometer) parade route

No one seemed to mind. There was enough afoot for lots of fun. With many school districts canceling classes, children were among the throngs begging for autographs and exchanging high-fives with their favorite players. Some of the Chiefs wore ski goggles to protect themselves from champagne showers.

The city and its leaders were beaming at being on the world stage, eager to celebrate the Chiefs' come-from-behind 25-22 win over the San Francisco 49ers in overtime.

"All over the world," team owner Clark Hunt said at the rally, "they know about this amazing place."

And Missouri Gov. Mike Parson, addressing the crowd, chided those who dismiss the state as mere "flyover country": "If you want to see the Lombardi Trophy, you're going to have to fly your asses to Kansas City, Missouri, and we'll show you more trophies."

Nearly every speech was filled with talk about bringing home the trophy again next season for a third straight time. The bravado was stunning from a team that, until 2020, hadn't won a Super Bowl since 1969.

And the city had embraced the turnaround, T-shirts had been flying off store shelves, Fireworks erupted in neighborhoods after each playoff win. Schools and businesses celebrated "Red Friday" en masse throughout the season.

"Three times. First time in NFL history. We're doing it. Love y'all," quarterback Patrick Mahomes vowed. "Three-peat!" the crowd chanted in response.

As the rally waned, Kelce grabbed the mic and began singing his own version of county music singer Garth Brooks' old standard "Friends in Low Places." It was a dig at analysts who had written off the Chiefs, who were hardly dominant during the regular season and had entered the playoffs as the AFC's No. 3 seed.

"We were the last one they would thought they would see there," Kelce sang as the crowd joined along. Some had climbed trees to watch.

Then: As the sea of red slowly dispersed, a sound. "Pop. Pop. Pop," recalled one witness. Gunshots. But from where?

'THIS IS NOT KANSAS CITY'

Some fans ran. Others stayed put, assuming they were hearing fireworks. Officers rushed toward the scene, guns drawn. Two fans even tackled an armed person. As ambulance sirens blared and helicopters swooped overhead, police cordoned off the rally site with crime scene tape.

"I can see it now, the headline: 'Dark Day'," said Gene Hamilton, a 61-year-old from Wichita, Kansas, as he waited behind the tape.

The thing that he couldn't get out of his mind was the music. It kept playing as people ran and he made plans to kneel behind a stone wall if needed. "Change the music," he recalled thinking.

Hana Lee, 28, had been walking to a bus when she heard gunshots and people yelling to "get down, get down." She saw two people on the ground and joined the shoving, pushing mass.

"How," she asked, "can something go from this happy to this?"

Everyone seemed to know someone who was there; that's the kind of town Kansas City is. Those in attendance were barraged with texts: Where are you? Are you safe?

"I just thought I'd do a quick check in after this day of celebration turned tragedy," Sarah Fox of Prairie Village, just over the state line in Kansas, texted to members of her book club.

Police Chief Stacey Graves said the parade likely attracted 1 million people in a city with a population of about 508,000 and a metropolitan area of about 2.2 million. The shootings, she said, do not reflect the community she knows.

"This is not Kansas City," said Graves, who had stationed around 600 of her officers along the route in addition to 200 more from other agencies. "I'm angered by what happened."

Lisa Lopez-Galvan, a mother and popular disc jockey, died. Among the 22 injured, many were children. School districts that had called off classes offered counseling, as did churches.

"It began with such joy and anticipation and has ended with tragedy and pain that none of us could have anticipated," said Michelle Hubbard, the superintendent of one of the largest Kansas school districts, Shawnee Mission.

One district student was even comforted by Chiefs coach Andy Reid in the chaos, and Hubbard underscored the importance of the community's interconnectedness. "In the next few days," she said, "we will need to lean on that unity, and on each other."

In one way in Kansas City, the sense of community that the Super Bowl championship provided earlier in the week has ebbed into the sense of community that a tragedy can create—unity of a different flavor, but just as potent. You could see the beginnings of that in the immediate aftermath of the violence, where there were no strangers in the chaos.

Ashley Coderre, a 36-year-old from Overland Park, Kansas, met a shaken father amid the gunfire, fleeing with him and his child, crouching with them behind a car. As she retold it, a truck rolled over a glass beer bottle, a remnant of the earlier celebration, shattering it. Coderre jumped. "Oh," she said, "that is not OK right now."

Eventually, she stopped behind a fire truck to regroup. That is where she met Allie Tipton, 30, of St. Louis, who was far from her car and was all alone. Tipton, too, had fled after hearing the gunshots and had helped a terrified woman find her missing child. Now, as the aftermath swirled around her, she didn't know what to do. Coderre, a stranger, was there.

Of her new friend, Tipton had this to say: "We trauma-bonded."

NFL suspends Raiders backup QB Garoppolo for violating PEDs policy

HENDERSON, Nev. (AP)—Las Vegas Raiders backup quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo was suspended by the NFL on Friday for the first two games of next season for violating the performance-enhancing drugs policy of the league and NFL Players Association.

ESPN also reported the Raiders are expected to release Garoppolo next month before an $11.25 million roster bonus kicks in.

Garoppolo's days in Las Vegas appeared over at midseason when then-interim coach Antonio Pierce replaced him with rookie Aidan O'Connell for the rest of the season. Pierce became the Raiders' full-time coach last month, and the Raiders also hired Tom Telesco as their general manager.

The Raiders signed Garoppolo last offseason to a three-year, $72.75 million contract when coach Josh McDaniels and GM Dave Ziegler were in charge. He previously quarterbacked the San Francisco 49ers, making an appearance in the Super Bowl and two in the NFC championship.

But Garoppolo threw seven touchdown passes and nine interceptions this season with a 77.6 quarterback rating, opening the way for O'Connell to take over.

Garoppolo said after the season he wanted to be able to play again somewhere.

"I'm pretty open," Garoppolo said at the time. "A lot of things are out of my control. I've had situations like that before, so as a player, you've got to roll with the punches a little bit. Whatever happens, I think it all happens for a reason. You've got to make the best of your situation."

The Raiders still have major decisions to make at quarterback.

O'Connell could keep the job after going 5-4 under Pierce, or Las Vegas could look to upgrade through free agency, a trade or this year's draft.

"There hasn't been a lot of years I've been the unquestioned starter going in, so I'm used to competing," O'Connell said on Jan. 25. "I had to compete to get to this spot that I'm in. I also think it would be right to have competition in this league. It's the NFL. It's the best of the best, so it's my job to try to keep my job."

Quest narrowly beat Aces to remain unbeaten

The game that highlighted the competitive forces of two Rocball teams in Round 5 of the 2024 Rocball League last week at the Marianas High School Gymnasium was the game in which the spirited players of Aces almost upset the undefeated Quest team in a 5-point overtime set.

And, if it wasn't for what could be considered a controversial call of a loose ball on court, the Quest would have won.

Aces won the first set, 30-12, but lost the last and second set, 19-15. In a Roccball game, a team cannot win a game in a losing set. The overtime sets are 5 points or a goal whichever comes first and the Aces won the overtime set, 5-4.

In the other four games of Rocball last week, Topshakaz defeated the Spicey Locals, 49-20; Bolleyballerz defeated Chagii Fahn, 60-22; Baddie-A defeated the Rizzlers, 38-17; and Nesian Power defeated Border Control, 46-20.

The Bolley Ballerz was the best multiple-point scoring team of Round 5 with 13 two-point aces, six 2-point xunk serves, one 2- point backcourt kee play, three 3-point goals, and 33 1-point court hits. One of the highlights of Round 5 was the jam made by Austin Pelisamen of Team Nesian Power against team Border Control in the fifth game of Round 5: A jam is a defensive play made by a frontline player spiking down a served ball.

After Round 5, Quest is atop the standings at 5-0 followed by Topshakaz and Bolley Ballerz with 4-1 win-loss slates. Nesian Power and Spicey Locals are the middle of the pack at 3-2, while Border Control, Aces, and Baddie-Z are all below .500 at 2-3, while Chagii Fahn and Rizzlers are both winless at 0-5. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Aces almost upset undefeated Quest in Round 5 of the 2024 Rocball League last week at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

3RD

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Tsukagoshi then had a tough matchup against Katjawan in the women's singles, but won Team NMI another point after three sets, 21-10, 20-22, 21-7.

Women's doubles partners Malonzo and Tsukagoshi then made light work of Augustine Capitaine and Olympe Darcheville, 21-10, 21-11, for NMI's third point.

Before their bout against New Caledonia, the NMI team overpowered Cook Islands, 4-1, last Saturday.

Also last Saturday, NMI swept all five events—mixed doubles, men's singles, women's singles, men's doubles, and women's doubles—against Tahiti for five points.

Last Friday, NMI nearly swept Fiji in their matchup, 4-1. Against neighbor Guam in their competition debut last Friday, NMI survived, 3-2.

Even with a great outcome for Team NMI, Macario acknowledged that the competition was "really tough." He said that almost everyone was near the same level of play, so it was also much of a "mind game" than just a physical one.

As for the team's overall performance, Macario said, "it was great. Everybody was locked in, focused, and determined. We were battling through some minor injuries as well too."

Pangilinan added that "overall, the kids did very well. After this, it'll give them the experience they need and know they need to work harder to compete in other competitions."

Macario said the tournament itself was great because they now know how NMI stacks up against other teams. "The NMI team now knows where they are at in terms of skill level with the other countries," he said. "I hope the team's performance inspires their friends too, because we have a lot of players—and now they see that we are able to medal in an Oceania event. If they want to, they can—just like their friends in this team that competed," said Macario.

Before the start of competition, the NMI team participated in a three-day training camp at the same venue.

Northern Marianas Badminton Association president Merlie Tolentino congratulated the team on their performance.

"Congratulations to our NMI Junior National Badminton Team players and coaches. The NMBA is very pleased that we are now getting the positive results we are aiming for when we started to bring the badminton program to schools and recruit young players a couple of years ago. We are investing in our junior program to provide opportunities for our players to compete outside the NMI and experience high-level competitions, and encourage them to represent our islands well on and off the playing court," said Tolentino.

She acknowledged coaches Janelle Pangilinan, Ezekiel Macario, and Nate Guerrero for taking on the challenge and responsibilities of coaching the NMI Junior National Badminton Team and contributing to the successful campaign of the visiting squad in Australia. Tolentino also thanked TanHoldings for providing assistance for the airfare of the team.

"This accomplishment was not achieved overnight. It took months or years of having players who are committed to the sport, not just during the interscholastic season, but as well as in training camps and regular practice sessions. Count the guidance and dedication from our hardworking coaches and the technical support from Badminton Oceania, plus the support too from the players' parents, teachers, and school officials. All these contributing factors have allowed us to build a strong program that is slowly delivering positive results for NMI badminton," Tolentino added.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Lina Tsukagoshi, right, returns to her and Shaina Malonzo's opponents from Guam during their women's doubles game in the Pacific U17 Invitation Team Challenge last Friday in Victoria, Australia.

SABLAN

From page 20

Lizama are at five; and five batters are tied with four each.

Clint Quitugua is the only batter with two triples, while 13 other batters are tied at one each.

Sablan's teammate, Joey Dela Cruz, leads the home run and RBIs category. He has six homers and 19 RBIs. Second to him in the home run category is Chris George with four; Sablan and Geoff Cruz have three each; and seven others are tied with two each.

Second to Dela Cruz in the RBIs category is Peter Sablan with 12; Maratita, Kolani Castro, and Sablan have 11 each.

In the runs category, George and Dela Cruz have 12 each; James Fleming, John Taitano, and Peter Sablan have 11 each; and John Terlaje and Mark Toves have 10 each.

As for pitchers, Redmen's Greg Magofna leads the league with the lowest ERA of 4.667 from two games and 12 innings pitched, with eight earned runs, and a 2-0 record. Second is Asahi's Dom Hideo with a 6.067 ERA, three games and 15 innings pitched, 13 earned runs, and a 3-0 record. Hagu La'mun's Openg Celis is third with a 6.3 ERA, three games and 20 innings pitched, 18 earned runs, and a 3-0 record.

In the women's category, Dela Cruz has the highest batting average with .800, missing only three at-bats for a record of 12 out of 15 plate appearances.

Second is teammate Edilyn Benjamin with a .768 average, from 10 of 13 at-bats; and third place is Bat & Boujee's Nish Mario, with a .688 average from 11 hits out of 16 at-bats.

Dela Cruz also leads the women in doubles with four; Kianu Aldan and Pauline Camacho have three each; and nine others are tied with two.

Dela Cruz shares the most runs scored with Aldan with nine each; Benjamin and Janica Iguel have eight each; and Rachel Salalila and Pauline Camacho have seven each.

Aldan has the most triples with two, and the most home runs with two as well. Thirteen are tied with two triples, while Kiana Camacho, Salalila, and Destiny Pangelinan have one homer each.

Salalila and Heather Kladikm collected the most RBIs with eight; Benjamin, Sheena Maratita, Mario, and Aldan are tied with seven each.

On the bump, the leading pitcher is BDE's Jovie Omar with a 4.455 ERA, five game and 33 innings pitched, 21 earned runs, and a perfect 5-0 record; second is Lady Blue Jays' Angel Deleon Guerrero at 5.31 ERA, five games and 29 innings pitched, 22 earned runs, and 3-2 record; and third is Bat & Boujee's Janice Celis with a 7.966 ERA, five games and 29 innings pitched, 33 earned runs, and a 2-3 record.

DODGERS

From page 20

3 third inning. The fourth inning ignited a late spark as the bottom of the order got on base—but they could not deliver and left them stranded once again.

The Dodgers went on to maintain their 12-3 lead, and to top it off, added four more runs in the last inning. The Reds could only conjure up one more run—to end the game, 16-4.

The championship series between the Dodgers and Pirates begins tonight, Monday, Feb. 19, with Game 2 scheduled this Wednesday, Feb. 21, and if needed Game 3 on Friday, Feb. 23.

LEIGH GASES

Dodgers shortstop Derek Aguon steps on the base for the first out before he releases the ball for a double play at first base as pitcher John Acosta watches the play unfold during their semifinals game against the Reds in the 2023 Tan Holdings-SBL Masters League last Thursday at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field.

McClung wins 2nd straight NBA Slam Dunk Contest title .

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Quest narrowly beat Aces to remain unbeaten.

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3rd place finish for NMI Jr. badminton players

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The NMI Junior National Badminton Team poses with their third-place medals, along with coaches Ezekiel Macario, left, and Janelle Pangilinan, right, during the awards ceremony of the Pacific Under 17 Invitation Team Challenge 2024 in Victoria, Australia yesterday afternoon.

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The NMI Junior National Badminton Team wrapped up the Pacific Under 17 Invitation Team Challenge 2024 with a Top 3 finish in the Land Down Under yesterday.

Their 3-2 win against New Caledonia solidified the NMI team's overall third place finish at the Badminton Geelong in Victoria, Australia.

The NMI team was made up of Marianas High School students Genelyn Lansangan, Marlon Bautista, and Sernantie Jimenez; Saipan Southern High School's Shaina Malonzo; Saipan International School's Lina Tsukagoshi, and Tanapag Middle School's Evan Seguritan. They were coached by NMI national team veterans Janelle Pangilinan and Ezekiel Macario.

NMI's mixed doubles partners—Jimenez and Malonzo—faced off against New Caledonia's Kimi Durand and Amy Katjawan, and won in two sets, 21-5, 21-5, for one point.

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Dodgers vs. Pirates in Masters finals

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Third seed Dodgers escaped the clutches of secon seed Reds to take the finals spot against the undefeated Pirates in the 2023 Tan Holdings-SBL Masters League.

The Dodgers got to work early on and defeated the Reds, 16-4, last Thursday at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field.

The Reds couldn't get past Dodgers pitcher John Acosta in the first inning and left lead better Justin Reyes and Dennis Cruz stranded on base. Meanwhile, the Dodgers' made their mark in their turn with the bat as they scored nine in the first inning.

Errors and passed balls by the Reds allowed Dodgers runners to advance, plus a 3-RBI triple from Jeff Cruz solidified a 7-0 inning. It wasn't over yet as Mark Villagomez and Clint Quitugua added two runs for a 9-0 lead.

The Reds then tried to get things started in the second inning and with a little help by wayward pitches by Acosta, allowed two runners to get on base by hit by pitches and one base on balls. All three batters scored after a single by Reyes and Cruz, which cut down the Dodgers' lead, 3-9.

However, Dodgers middleman Bruce Norita hit a 2-run homer in the second inning after a run scored, for a bigger lead of 12-3. More hits pummeled the Reds pitching staff, but they managed to get out of the inning without any more damage.

The Reds' downfall was their inability to get hits off the ground, as the Dodgers' pitching induced ground balls and strikeouts, making for an easy 1-2-

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LEIGH GASES

Dodgers first baseman Clint Quitugua stretches to catch the second out of the double play in the first inning against the Reds during their semifinals game of the 2023 Tan Holdings-SBL Masters League last Thursday at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field.

Sablan, Dela Cruz lead BASA rankings

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Man Amigos' Manny Sablan and 670 Magas Babes' Catalyna Dela Cruz are the leading batters in their respective divisions of the 2024 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association as of Feb. 11.

Sablan leads the master's division with a batting average of .750 from 12 hits out of 16 at-bats. Second is the Redmen's Tony Pangelinan at .733 from 11 of 15 plate appearances, and third is Tokahao's Alvin Takai with a .706 average from 12 of 17 at-bats.

In the doubles category, Jason Reyes leads with seven; Audie Maratita and Joe

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LEIGH GASES

Manny Sablan pictured here in his 2023 Tan Holdings-SBL Masters League team Pirates, is the 2024 Budweiser Belau Amateur Softball Association's batting leader as of Feb. 11. He is in the master's league team Man Amigos.